

# BEADLE'S HALF DIME Library

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## DICK DOOM'S DEATH GRIP



OR,

### The Detective by Destiny.

A Story of the Shadow Sharks  
of New Orleans.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

#### CHAPTER I. THE BOY TRAMP.

ALONG the dusty highway, running close to the levee, which kept back at high water the overwhelming floods of the Mississippi River, a mere boy was trudging along, weary of foot and with wan face, while a dog trotted at his heels.

He was dressed in a gray suit, slouch hat, top boots, and woolen shirt, and carried his entire wealth of this world's goods in a soldier's knapsack strapped to his back.

THE BRAVE BOY TRAMP HASTENED TO THE CARRIAGE DOOR AND CRIED CHEERILY:  
"ALL RIGHT! THEY ARE BOTH LAID OUT!"



An oil-cloth, pair of blankets and rubber coat were strapped to the knapsack, to which also dangled a frying-pan, tin cup and plate.

A small, double-barrel shot-gun was slung over his shoulder in a free-and-easy way, a hunting-knife was in his belt, and a holster doubtless held a small revolver.

A haversack was swung under one arm, a lariat under the other, and, altogether, the young traveler looked like one of the boys now and then arrested on their way to the wild West to slay Indians, and which the newspapers untruthfully say are urged to run away from home by "Dime Novel" writers, as though there were no bad, runaway boys before Dime Novels were ever thought of! or, indeed, as if such boys ever read anything but the flash weekly papers or the semi-vicious penny dailies!

But this youth was no Indian-hunter, no adventure-hunting hero. He was simply going out in the world to seek his fortune, and his stock in trade he had with him.

With but little money, and not being a beggar, he could not take a steamer to New Orleans, or ask food to be given him at the various plantations he passed; and so with his shot-gun, fishing-lines and camp outfit he fed himself as he went along.

A roast potato, raw onion, some fruit, crackers, bacon, coffee and game furnished ample and good food, for himself and dog.

He camped at night alone in the woods, his dog his sole companion, and sharing with him in rainy weather his little tent, made of India-rubber blankets, and his bed.

Thus he had traveled long and far, and yet he had enjoyed the road and the life of freedom he led.

Now and then he was met by some kind persons who would take him to their home for a rest; but his aim was to reach New Orleans, where he hoped to obtain certain work, to accomplish the purpose of his life.

"Well, Guard, there seems to be a good camping-place in those woods yonder, so there we'll stop, for I don't feel just well to-day," said the youth, addressing his dog, which was a large, vicious-looking brute, but was all humility to his young master.

Guard wagged his tail in a satisfied way, for he was carrying, strapped upon his back, a red blanket, his water-bucket and a cornet, which the boy played with rare skill.

But, besides these, Guard was carrying a string of fine fish, and a couple of fat quails, which he was anxious to get his teeth into, for it was share and share alike with the dog and his master.

The woods which the youth noted ran from the back country to the river-bank, and grew densely upon the levee.

Up to the thicket the boy went, and in a few minutes he had pitched his tent, for the night was coming on threatening rain, with poles he cut with his hatchet, and made a barrier around with stout bushes.

Leaves formed a mattress for his blankets, and being prepared against the weather, he sat down to pick his quail and scale his fish, for he had gathered some wood, and brought his tin-bucket full of water from the river.

The highway ran within a hundred feet of him, and he had a view of it for some distance, from his camp, and also looked over upon the river.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon a small dug-out,\* coming rapidly up the river, close in to the bank.

It was paddled by two rough-looking men, who, reaching a break in the bank, ran it inshore and sprung out.

The dug-out was dragged half its length out of the water; the two men ran up over the levee, and crouched down among some bushes on the edge of the highway.

"What game are they after, I wonder?" said the boy tramp, as he saw their mysterious actions, and motioned to the dog to keep quiet.

His question was almost immediately answered by the rumble of wheels, and, a moment after, a handsome carriage, with a negro driver in livery, rolled into sight.

It was drawn by two spirited horses, but who rode within the carriage the boy could not see.

As it drew nearer out sprung the two men; two shots rung out, one dropping one of the horses, the other the negro from the box.

In a second the two men had gained their point, for they had brought the carriage to a halt, and while one held the other horse, his companion threw open the carriage-door.

But, he staggered back as a shot was fired in

his face; but, unhurt, he returned the fire, discharging the weapon directly into the carriage.

It was the last act of his life, as he dropped dead from a shot fired by the lad, who then boldly ran upon the other foot-pad, who turned to face him, when Guard sprang at his throat and dragged him to the ground, while the brave boy tramp hastened to the carriage door and cried cheerily:

"All right! They are both laid out."

"What! a mere boy so bravely attack those men?" said a man's voice in surprise.

"Oh, no, sir! had my dog to help me," was the modest reply, and the boy tramp doffed his hat as he saw a lady also in the carriage.

#### CHAPTER II.

##### THE UNKNOWN WAIF.

IN the carriage was an elderly gentleman of distinguished appearance, and dressed in the *neglige* style of a southern planter.

He was holding his arm with one hand, for the bullet of the ruffian who had fired upon him had cut through it.

By his side sat a young and very pretty little maiden of thirteen, whose face was now pale with anxiety for her father.

"You are wounded, sir, and your coachman is dead. Can I take one of your horses and ride for help, for the other animal was shot?" said the boy tramp.

"Do so, my brave lad, with all speed; but, are both of those men dead?"

"Yes, sir; I shot one and Guard did for the other."

"Here, Guard! Stay here until I come back!"

"Now, sir, tell me where I shall go?"

"Back up the road a mile is a plantation, our home."

"I remember it, sir, for I passed there this afternoon."

"Go and tell the servants to send for Doctor Newman, and to bring a pair of horses here with all dispatch, also a wagon to carry poor Tom's body home."

"Yes, sir," and the boy sprang to the horse, unfastened him from the carriage, leaped upon his back and was off like the wind.

In less than a half-hour he was back again and announced:

"I sent for the doctor, sir, to meet you at your home, and the men are coming with the carriage, horses and wagon."

"Thanks, my noble young friend! You have indeed rendered me invaluable service this day, for those men sought to accomplish a double act of devilry in their attack, as they knew that I sent my daughter home from the city with a large sum of money, and they would have kidnapped her too, and forced me to pay ransom for her."

"Fortunately, I did not have to remain in the city, as I expected, and came with her; but you would have rescued her just the same had I not been along."

"Thank him, Marion!"

"Indeed, I do, from the bottom of my heart, papa," and the young girl held out her gloved hand.

"My hands are all dirt, miss, and I'd only spoil your pretty gloves."

"I was cooking my supper when I saw those fellows come up the river in their canoe, land and hide."

"Then you came in sight, and Guard and I chipped in to help you out."

"And, nobly you did it; but, where were you?"

"In my camp yonder in the thicket on the levee, sir."

"Your camp?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are traveling, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who are you with?"

"Only Guard and me, sir."

"Why what are you, my lad?" asked Planter Grayhurst, more and more interested in the youth.

"I suppose I am a boy tramp, sir."

"A boy tramp?" cried Marion Grayhurst, her large eyes dilating, for a tramp of any kind was set down in her mind as a most obnoxious kind of a creature.

"Yes, miss."

"Where is your home, my lad?"

"I have none, sir."

"And your parents?"

"Dead."

"Have you no brothers, or sisters?"

"No, sir."

"No kindred?"

They saw his lips quiver, and he responded, after a slight hesitation.

"I have no relatives, sir, that care for me. I am all alone in the world."

"My poor little waif, you shall be no longer friendless," the planter said, with feeling.

"Yes, you shall be my dear brother," Marion said, in her pretty way.

"Oh, no! I must make my way in the world, thank you, for I am going to New Orleans."

"Have you no friends, there?"

"No, sir."

"What are you going to do?"

"Well, sir, I thought I would be a boy detective."

The planter laughed in spite of his pain, while he said:

"Well, you have done well to-day as a beginning, my lad; but where are you from?"

"Northern Mississippi, sir."

"And have you walked thus far on your way to New Orleans?"

"Yes, sir, for I was too poor to ride; but we have got along pretty well."

"Pretty well! Poor boy, you are a little hero. Where is your camp?"

"Yonder, sir," and the boy pointed to the thicket.

"Oh, papa! may I go and see it?"

"Yes, my child," and the planter, though suffering, went with them.

"Well, my young friend, just strike your tent and go home with us."

"I thank you, sir, but—"

"I will have no excuses, for I will take you with us. Ah! there come the horses now, so get your traps together."

"Yes, you *must* come, and I'll help you pack up," cried Marion.

Thus urged, the youth obeyed. Guard had his saddle strapped on, the youth shouldered his traps and gun, and they reached the carriage just as two negroes came up with a pair of carriage horses.

Behind them came a wagon and a couple more men.

"Well, boys, we were attacked here by those two men, and but for this brave youth—"

"And my dog."

"Yes, and his dog, I would have been killed and robbed, and Miss Marion carried off."

"Poor Tom was shot, as you see, so get his body into the wagon, and two of you stay with those dead robbers until I can send the constable to take charge of them."

"Now, my lad, you go with us."

"I'm not fit, sir, so let me ride up with the driver."

"No, into the carriage with us you go, my little waif, and you are to understand that you have laid the foundation of your fortune this day."

"Drive on, Aleck," and the carriage rolled rapidly away, Guard trotting behind, in utter amazement at the fact that his young master was not afoot.

#### CHAPTER III.

##### IN LUCK.

THE Ferns was one of the finest plantations up on the river, and situated within driving distance of New Orleans.

For over a century the Grayhursts had lived there, and the estate had increased in value until it was most valuable.

The old mansion was large, with wings and extensions, piazzas and rooms that were commodious and comfortable.

Flowers innumerable, orange trees, magnolias and live-oaks surrounded the mansion, while afar in the rear were the quarters of the field hands, the sugar mill and the outbuildings.

Such was the house which the young waif found himself ushered into, and received as an honored guest.

Doctor Newman had not yet arrived, so the boy said:

"I have had some experience with wounds, sir, and may be able to help you until the doctor arrives."

"I shall place myself in your hands, my lad, for it is still bleeding, and somehow you inspire me with a great deal of confidence," said Colonel Grayhurst, who was a gallant soldier of the Mexican war.

The boy set to work at once and did dress the wound quite skillfully and with a nerve that showed he was not one to flinch at sight of blood.

"Now, my lad, I'll tell you just what you are to do," said the colonel.

"Yes, sir."

"This is my home, and here I live with my two children, Marion, whom you have seen, and my son Gordon, who is older than you are by

\* Canoe made by cutting out a log.



several years, and who with his sister is home from school on a vacation.

"I am a rich man, and I want you to remain here with me, and help me with the plantation, for I am getting old.

"You read and write, of course?"

"Oh, yes, sir; I have had a better education than most boys of my age."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen, sir."

"And you have not told me your name?"

"Dixie, sir."

"Dixie is your Christian or surname?"

"My name is Dixie Gray, sir."

"Indeed? Then you have half of my name, for mine is Dick Grayhurst."

The boy smiled at this and Colonel Grayhurst continued:

"Now, you are to be my clerk, secretary in fact; write my letters for me, keep my accounts and look after my interests. You shall have a pleasant room, a horse for your own, and we will hunt and fish together—in fact, be the best of friends, while I shall engage to pay you fifty dollars a month for your services."

"Fifty dollars a month, sir?" gasped Dixie.

"Yes, is it not enough?"

"Oh, sir, I have worked for the past six months for just thirty dollars—five dollars a month, and I have been six weeks on my tramp, and have more than half of the money left!"

"Well, you deserve credit; but your salary here, Dixie, shall be what I said and both my children will be glad to know I am not to be left alone in their absence."

"You will like my boy Gordon, Dixie, I am sure."

"I know I will, sir, if he is like you and Miss Marion," was the frank response.

"Well, he is like us both, and a splendid, manly fellow. You will win his heart by what you did to-day, for he loves pluck and nerve, and you possess both in a wonderful degree."

"You won't be haunted, I hope, by seeing the ghosts of those ruffians."

"No, sir; what I did was to save your life. They brought their fate upon themselves."

"Well said, Dixie: but, here comes the doctor at last, and as he may need an assistant in extracting the bullet you had better remain to help him."

"I was going to ask you to do so, sir."

The doctor now entered, not having been at home when sent for, and said:

"Well, colonel, a little shooting scrape, I hear, and I congratulate you upon getting off so easily."

"But for this brave boy I would have been killed."

"Then you owe him a debt of gratitude that can never be paid."

"Ah! who dressed this wound?"

"My young rescuer, here, Master Dixie Gray."

"Glad to know you, Master Gray. You should be a doctor, for this is well done—very well done indeed."

"Help me, please, for there is a bullet to extract."

The doctor went to work in a business-like way and soon had the bullet out. Then he dressed the wound and consented to remain to supper.

Dixie Gray was led off to his room by a servant, Marion having already selected what chamber he was to have, and she was mistress at The Ferns.

Dixie found himself in charming quarters, and gazed about him, not with an air of awkwardness at his elegant surroundings, but like one who had been accustomed to such all his life.

He brushed up his clothes, the servant blacked his boots, he took a clean merino shirt out of his knapsack, and soon made himself presentable.

His room opened upon a little piazza, and there lay Guard upon a mat, seemingly content for a halt in such a delightful home.

Guard appeared to feel that he, too, was an honored guest, and knowing where his master's room was located, he made up his mind to stay there.

There was quite a change for the better when Dixie presented himself in the library before supper, and was welcomed by Marion and her father.

Just then there came the clatter of hoofs outside, a sudden halt, a quick step, and a tall, handsome young man of nineteen entered.

"My dear father, I learned of your and Marion's danger but now, as I met the party who had held an inquest on those two wretches and buried them, and they spoke of a daring rescue by a mere boy."

"Here he is, my son—Master Dixie Gray. I

owe him my life, and he saved your sister from being kidnapped, not to speak of some twenty thousand dollars I had with me, being saved also."

"Master Dixie Gray, I am yours for life, and mine are no idle words," was the frank response of Gordon Grayhurst to his father's words.

"I certainly appreciate your friendship, sir. Your father said that I would like you."

"That means that you do! Good!"

"Now, doctor, how badly wounded is my father?"

"Slightly, though it was a close call, Gordon."

"Then I feel relieved; but is supper ready, sir, for I am as hungry as a shark, and if I may be excused, will go in in my riding-suit."

"Supper is ready, sah," said a servant, appearing at the library door.

"Master Dixie, will you escort my sister in to supper?" said Gordon Gray.

"Come, doctor," and Gordon Grayhurst slipped his hand in his father's arm, while the boy, with marked courtesy, bowed and offered his arm to Marion.

"A boy tramp he called himself; but he is a gentleman born, I'll wager high on it," muttered the colonel.

At supper the youth made no mistake, and when, later in the evening, Marion brought him his cornet and asked him to play, he charmed them all with his really extraordinary skill.

That night the boy tramp went to sleep in a luxurious bed, Guard on the rug before the hearth, and as the rain descended in torrents and the winds howled he said to his canine comrade:

"We are in great luck this night, Guard, to be in out of the wet."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### AGAIN ADRIFT.

THREE years have passed since the day Dixie Gray made his last camp as a boy tramp, and had his destiny change so suddenly for the better.

After six months' service for Colonel Grayhurst that gentleman said to him one day:

"See here, Dixie: I am not acting just right by you, and I believe it is because I am selfish and wish you with me."

"You have served me well, and yet I feel that you ought to be better employed than writing letters, adding up figures and keeping an old man from getting lonesome."

"So I have decided to enter you as a student of one of the best military schools in the country, and see if I cannot get you, in time, into West Point or the Naval Academy."

"All arrangements have been made, so you start as soon as we can get your outfit ready in New Orleans."

In vain did Dixie urge that he had no claim upon the colonel to do this for him; but, he was not listened to and when the time set arrived, he was started off to a military institute.

Thus two years went by and then news came that the colonel had been thrown from his horse and killed.

A letter from Gordon Grayhurst told Dixie that the wish of his father was that he remain at the military institute until he graduated, which would be the next term; and furthermore told him that the colonel had remembered him handsomely in his will.

Dixie Gray heard of the colonel's death with heartfelt sorrow, and wrote both Gordon and Marion letters of deepest sympathy, while to the former he said that he would respect his father's wishes, as to finishing his education, though he certainly had no claim upon him for a legacy, and could not accept it, but would transfer what had been left him to the brother and sister, when it could be so arranged.

A manly letter came from Gordon in reply, and a sisterly one from Marion, both saying that he was as a brother and was to be so treated.

Still the proud youth would not yield, but insisted that he would give up the legacy.

Then followed some weeks of silence, and it was broken by Dixie Gray, receiving the following letter:

"NEW ORLEANS, LA.,  
Feb. 1st, 18—

"TO MASTER DIXIE GRAY:—

"SIR:—Having been appointed executor of the estate of the late Richard Grayhurst, planter, and having read the will of the same before those interested, I wish to inform you that, when the children of Mr. Grayhurst assert that they knew their father intended to reward you, for certain services rendered, by leaving you a legacy, there is not one word to that effect in the testament now before me, nor any allusion whatever to your name.

"I may as well state that both Mr. Gordon Grayhurst and his sister state that there was a later will made, but as there is no evidence of it, this one must stand, and his estate is divided between his two children, a few legacies to faithful servants, and one to his life-long friend and adviser, the writer of this.

"Under such circumstances, you will understand that you have no claim whatever upon those to whom you are not bound by ties of kinship, and will have to look to yourself for support after the present term of your institute closes, for your board and tuition are paid up to the vacation in July."

"What articles of value, or otherwise, belonging to you at The Ferns, I have had packed up and will Express to you, charges prepaid."

"Yours truly,

GEORGE THURSTON,

"Attorney and Executor Grayhurst Estate."

The hot blood rushed into the face of the youth as he read this insulting letter.

He had met Lawyer Thurston, for he had been often at The Ferns; and more—from what he knew of Colonel Grayhurst's business affairs he was well aware that there was considerable due the planter from the attorney, which the latter had borrowed.

"It seems to me that the colonel was angry with Lawyer Thurston, for he had stopped his visits to The Ferns, I know."

That was not Colonel Grayhurst's last will, either, as I know, and if Lawyer Thurston has not found it, I believe I could."

"Oh, no! Colonel Grayhurst did make, sign and seal another will; that I positively know; but I will keep silent, as the real heirs get the estate, and the will the lawyer speaks of simply gives him the debts he owes the planter."

"Yes, I will remain here until the end of the term, and study day and night, for it will be about all the education I will get."

Then the youth calmly dismissed the matter from his mind.

But, soon after came letters from Gordon and Marion. They were deeply grieved at the reading of the will, to find that he, Dixie, had not been remembered; and more, they had felt certain there was a later will, until assured by Lawyer Thurston that there was not.

But their home was Dixie's home, and so he must ever consider it.

The youth was touched by this act of appreciation on their part, and wrote both of them in a pleasant strain.

At last the term ended, and Dixie Gray stood at the head of his class, and received the prizes and honors.

Then he departed from the institute, once more adrift in the world, and with just seventy-five dollars in his pocket as the foundation of his fortune.

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE LONE CABIN.

TIME was no object to Dixie Gray, but money was.

To save the latter and spend the former, he took the train from the institute he had been attending, to a point on the Mississippi River.

There he watched his chance and engaged passage upon a flat-boat, in consideration for which he paid five dollars, and agreed to help work the craft.

Thus he drifted down the Mississippi, his destination, as in years before, being New Orleans.

Disaster, however, attended the flat-boat at Bayou Sara, where a steamboat crashed in upon it in the dark.

With his belongings Dixie got ashore, and determined to turn tramp once more and foot it to the city.

He purchased an outfit for the road in Bayou Sara, and set out bright and early one morning on his tramp.

He had been an athlete at the institute, finding no rival, and the trip was as nothing to him.

So on he went, camping at night, and jogging along by day.

"Well, I'll reach town with forty dollars in my pockets, just ten more than I had three years ago."

"But I had Guard then, and— But now I have more experience, and certainly a very fair education."

"I believe it is going to rain, and unless I push on after dark I cannot reach the city to-night."

So he trudged on for several miles further, when off on one side, nearly hidden in the woods, he spied a hut.

Just then he saw a mile-post, marking to the city ten miles.

As the rain threatened to descend in torrents at any minute, he sought the hut, expecting to find some one dwelling there.



But the hut was deserted, the door open. It had but one room, with a board attic above, a trap-door being in one corner.

There was wood piled up on the hearth, and the remains of a fire, and the youth was congratulating himself upon his luck, when a terrific crash of thunder fairly shook the earth.

He stepped to the door and saw a small row-boat out upon the water, coming directly toward the shore, the occupants rowing with greatest energy, as though determined to reach the hut, which they had seen.

He also heard the rapid clatter of hoofs, and suddenly came over him the thought, an instinct of danger that come to us all, that he should not be seen there.

Quick as a flash he slung his traps upon his back, climbed up the wall of logs, pushed up the board trap and got into the attic.

He had just time to lower the trap and throw himself down on top of it when the horse halted at the door and a voice called out:

"Mazzini! Napoli! you there?"

An oath in Italian followed and then the horseman came into the cabin, bringing his saddle with him.

He was a tall, well-dressed man, and to the surprise of Dixie, who looked down through a crack in the boards, he wore a mask, completely shielding his face.

Muttering something in Italian, he hung his saddle upon a peg, and then stepped to the door.

"Ah! there come two of the beggars now. Yes, and the other two, also," he said, with but a slight accent.

Then without came the sound of hurrying feet and two men dashed into the cabin.

They were Italians and as villainous a looking pair as could be found amid the scourgings of "sunny Italy."

"You came by boat?" asked the masked man, and who seemed of a different class from the last comers.

"Yes, signor."

"And here come Carlos and Honore, Signor Captain."

"Yes, they walked, and were just in time to save a ducking."

As the man addressed as "captain" spoke, in dashed two other men just as there came a down-pour of rain that was terrific.

The two late comers saluted their "captain"—one in Spanish the other in French.

"Well, comrades, we are all here and just in time to save a drenching. But my idea is that you had better risk a ducking, as I will, and return to the city to-night, than remain here, for to be found here would look suspicious."

"Now, Carlos, what have you to report?"

"I have to report, Signor Captain," answered the man in broken English, that I have robbed a vacant house on St. Charles avenue, and have two gold watch, two chain, three hundred dollar in gold and three diamond ring."

"Here was all."

"Except what you have kept back for yourself; but, this will do very well, and the police report, when the robbery is known, will state just what was taken."

"I forgot to say, Signor Captain, that I have one more diamond ring."

"Don't let your memory fail you again, Carlos," and the captain placed the articles named upon a handkerchief spread out upon the floor.

"Now, Mazzini, what have you to report?"

"I got this two thousand dollars good money for the bad money you gave me, signor."

"You have done well," and the money was counted and put upon another handkerchief on the floor.

"Now, it is your turn, Napoli?"

"I have pick pocket of old gent, Signor Cap."

"Here it."

He handed over a leather wallet well-filled.

"Ah! there are a thousand dollars here, some bonds, checks, notes and important papers."

"This may be worth more than the thousand to advertise."

"But I'll divide on the strength of the thousand."

"You next, Honore," and the wallet was laid upon the floor.

"Ah, signor, my report was ze red one," said the Frenchman with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You shed blood, eh?"

"Mooch blood, Monsieur le Signor Capitaine—I kill!"

"Then you were the one who entered the Seldon Mansion the other night, was surprised by the return of the owner whose family was away, and killed him?"

"I was ze man, Monsieur Le Signor," was the frank confession.

"There is a reward of three thousand dollars out for you, Honore?"

"Oui, monsieur, I was read it."

"Well, what did you get?"

The man drew from his breast pocket a velvet box of jewelry, a bag of gold and roll of bills.

"Ah! these will more than pay your reward, for the jewelry is worth a thousand, there is six hundred in gold here, and just three thousand in bills."

"Let me run this over now and pay you your percentage, according to the laws of the Loyal League of the Golden Gallows."

"Here, Honore, is your Balm of Gilead for your conscience—five hundred dollars."

"You, Napoli, Mazzini and Carlos, get three hundred each, for you took no life to get your quota for the L. L. G. G."

"I have other trails to send you on, and, as usual, shall leave orders at the Santa Cruz Cafe for you within three days."

"If I am discover, Monsieur le Signor Verdi?" said the Frenchman.

"The L. L. G. G. will see to it that you escape punishment, as in duty bound, Honore."

"Very mooch thanks, monsieur."

"Now, we had better get off, for the rain has slackened considerably."

"Yes, captain," and pocketing their percentage of their robberies the four men saluted with a peculiar sign, and left the cabin, the captain alone remaining.

## CHAPTER VI.

### \$5,000.00 REWARD.

THE man who remained in the cabin stood gazing after the departing men until they had disappeared, two of them on the way back to New Orleans by road, and the other couple returning in their boat by the river to the city.

Then the man removed his mask, folded it up carefully and placed it in an inner pocket.

His next move was to take out a pencil and paper, label the different handkerchiefs with the stolen booty, and put them securely away about his person.

Taking his saddle down from the peg, as it had stopped raining now, he went out and saddled his horse.

Dixie Gray would have given much to get a better look at him and his horse; but he dared not leave his hiding-place.

He heard the man ride away, urging his horse to a gallop, and he had gone away from rather than toward the city.

It was just twilight now, and the youth came down from his hiding-place, and where he had learned so much in a very short while.

"Well, it seems that I am destined to be a detective."

"Yes, a Detective by Destiny is my lot, and there is no need for me to seek any other career, at least until I have solved certain mysteries that I have registered a vow I will yet solve, and had revenge upon those to whom I owe only hatred."

"Ah, me! I have been made old beyond my years; but the path that lies before me I will take."

He gazed out of the door and saw that the whole country was drenched by the storm, and that the roads were muddy.

Then, too, the storm had not swept away, but was rolling up again with increased fury.

"Here I stay to-night, and I am in luck to have such good quarters."

"Let me see if this door cannot be locked."

The lock was broken, but there was an iron staple upon the door, another upon the frame, and through these the youth drove a piece of wood, fastening it securely.

Then he built a fire, got out his frying-pan, tin cup and plate.

He had a canteen of water he had gotten from a spring an hour before, and so he made some coffee, fried some bacon, roasted a potato, and with crackers had a very nice supper.

Then he spread his blankets, and going out of the cabin, passed around it slowly to see if there was any crevice through which the light shone, so that any one could look in and see him.

He saw none, and placing several of the largest logs upon the fire, laid his shot-gun and revolver by his side and lay down to sleep.

He heard the howling of the storm, the terrific peals of thunder and the driving rain, but feeling all secure, did not trouble himself about what was going on outside.

When he awoke, a mocking-bird was singing in a tree near the cabin, the sunlight was piercing under the crack of the door, and he knew that he had enjoyed an undisturbed rest during the entire night.

"Well, I did sleep sound," he muttered, and opening the door he looked out.

The skies were clear, the winds had dried the grounds considerably, and all nature was smiling and beautiful, refreshed by the rain.

He cooked his breakfast, and then, shouldering his traps, started upon his tramp to the town.

An hour's walk brought him to the outskirts of the city, and not wishing to attract attention by his odd baggage, he got on a horse-car and rode the balance of the way.

"Can you tell me where I can find the Santa Cruz Cafe?" he asked of the conductor.

"It's in the foreign part of the city, and you can catch another car at Royal street which will carry you near it," said the conductor.

Half an hour after, the barmaid in the Santa Cruz Cafe was surprised to see a youth enter, carrying an odd traveling outfit.

He raised his hat politely to her, and asked if he could get lodgings there.

"I speak only French, monsieur," she replied.

Instantly he addressed her in that language, and was told that Landlord Tomasini let rooms, and at what price would the monsieur wish to pay, for there were pleasant apartments from three dollars to ten dollars a week.

The youth would like to look at the rooms and make a choice.

The landlord, the girl said, was always up until very late, so did not rise until twelve o'clock *dejeuner*, but she would show him the rooms.

This she did, and a more particular lodger she had never seen, for he looked over all the empty rooms before he decided.

At length he made his choice, and put the girl in a good humor by paying her a week in advance and then asking her to take a glass of wine at his expense.

He took his traps up, made himself comfortable, arranged his toilet and returned to the cafe for dinner.

While waiting, he picked up a morning paper and read as follows:

### "\$5000.00 REWARD."

"The above reward will be paid to any one furnishing information that will lead to the capture of the murderers of Mr. Soule Seldon at his home on the night of the 15th ult."

"APPLY TO CHIEF OF POLICE."

"I think I shall get that reward," muttered Dixie Gray, as he read the above over for the second time.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BOY DETECTIVE.

GLANCING over the paper carefully the youth came across the following editorial:

"We think we have had enough of late to prove that our police and detective forces are inadequate to accomplish what the city expects of them, or there is certainly a very daring, clever and dangerous band of men engaged in robberies."

"Need we refer to the bold burglar who entered the home of Mr. Soule Seldon, and not only took the life of that gentleman but succeeded in robbing his home of valuable jewels, some gold and bank-notes?"

"This man, or men, escaped, and there has not been the slightest clew as to who he is, and the liberal reward offered by the family, of five thousand dollars, has not stimulated our Secret Service men sufficiently for them to even glean the slightest suspicion to fix upon any one."

"Then came the bold seizure of Banker Swain on his way home, in a fashionable street, and his loss of his money, bonds and valuable papers, for which he also offers a reward of two thousand dollars."

"A third instance is the entrance of the vacant home of Mr. Deering, who is away for several days, and the robbery of jewelry, diamonds and some gold."

"This all within one week, not to speak of some daring counterfeiters in our midst who have spread considerable of the 'queer' upon our people."

"How long will this lawless state of affairs last is the question we respectfully ask the chief of police."

"If a sense of duty to our citizens does not inspire our officers of the law to catch these criminals who are tarnishing the good name of our city, let us hope that the rewards offered, five thousand by the Seldons, two thousand by Banker Swain and one thousand dollars by Mr. Deering, notwithstanding the standing reward for the capture of the counterfeiters, may influence the detectives to hunt down the law-breakers and bring them to justice."

The youth read this article with the deepest of interest and then said:

"I have got within my grasp, if I manage right, the sum of ten thousand dollars, a very handsome fortune for a boy to begin life on."

"Yes, five, two, one, and two thousand for the counterfeiters, make ten."

"Now to win it, for I would know those four



fellows I saw in the cabin anywhere, but I only wish I had gotten a better look at their captain. "They either live here, or get their secret orders here, and the way to find out is to be on the watch."

Just then Landlord Tomasini put in an appearance, and after a short talk with the barmaid came over to where Dixie Gray sat.

The youth had seen him enter, but appeared not to notice him until he said:

"Good-morning, monsieur."

"A stranger in town, mademoiselle tells me?"

"Yes, sir; I am just from the North."

"And you are to be my guest, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, I came to look for work, and so wanted lodgings."

"Well, we only receive a few lodgers, but then you will not be here long?"

"No, sir, only a week or two, I suppose; perhaps not so long."

"Have you no friends in the city?"

"No, sir, I am all alone."

"And without money?"

"No, I have some twenty dollars left, but I shall soon get work."

"What can you do?"

"I can go in an office, I hope; but if not, I can go to sea."

"Well, when you wish to go to sea, I will give you a chance with some sailor friend of mine."

"You will find a rough crowd here at night, so you better have your supper early and go to bed."

"Thank you, sir, I will."

Just then Dixie's dinner was brought, and soon after he went out for a walk.

As soon as he disappeared, Landlord Tomasini went up to his room and looked over his luggage.

He found nothing more than changes of clothing, several books, a shot-gun, blankets, and cooking utensils.

"A green country boy, that is all."

"Let him go, for he is not worth the powder," said the landlord to himself.

But in spite of the admonition given him, Dixie Gray did not take his supper early and go to bed.

He came in late, having attended the theater, he told the landlord, who led him to a retired corner, as he said he wanted something to eat.

The place by night was very different from what it was by day.

There were fully a hundred men there, all seated at tables, drinking, talking and gambling with cards and dice.

If there was an American native born in the cafe, Dixie was unable to pick him out, for they were Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese and French, and a harder lot could not be found grouped together, was the youth's opinion.

He ate his supper slowly, glanced over the crowd, and his eyes rested upon every face.

"Carlos," he mused to himself.

A moment after he said:

"Mazzini."

It was some time before he found another face familiar to him, but at last he did so.

"Napoli," he muttered. Soon after a man came into the cafe, and walking up to the landlord, talked some time to him.

At last he turned his face, and Dixie said to himself:

"Number Four—Honore."

Then he arose, paid the landlord for his supper, managing to get another look into each of the faces of those he sought, and went to his room.

"To-morrow I shall begin my man-hunt," muttered the young detective as he prepared to retire in the strange and dangerous retreat where he had daringly sought lodgings to carry out his end.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A SURPRISED CHIEF.

THE chief of the New Orleans police sat in his private office, a cloud upon his brow.

He had seen the same editorial which Dixie Gray had been interested in, and having received the report of his officers and Secret Service men, had not discerned one clew to the discovery of the murderers of Mr. Seldon, or the robberies lately committed.

He had too in his hands a list of robberies, and several murders that had occurred within the past year, and noted that they had happened at certain intervals with astonishing regularity. They had, also, appeared to occur without danger to either the robber or murderer, and invariably hit the fashionable people of the city.

Not one these lawless depredators had been captured thus far, and not the slightest clew to their identity had been obtained.

Thus was the chief musing when the officer on duty reported that a youth wished to see him.

"Who is he?"

"Never saw him before, sir."

"Send him in, Bob."

Into the room came Dixie Gray.

He cast a quick glance about him, at the various adornments of the walls, then took in the chief's face with another look, and saluting him politely stepped forward and awaited to be addressed.

The chief had taken him in, too, at a glance, and saw a well-formed, handsome youth of nineteen, about the medium size, and with a face full of pluck and determination.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" he said.

"Nothing, sir, thank you."

"Ah!"

"It is the other way this time, sir, for I have come to serve you."

"Indeed, and what can you do for me?"

"Have you time for a business talk with me, sir?"

"Oh, yes, I'll make the time," said the chief, more than ever impressed with his visitor.

"May I ask if you have any clew to the murder and robberies lately committed in your city, sir?"

The chief started in spite of himself.

"Have you any clew?" he asked.

"I asked the question of you, sir, please."

"Well, I'll answer frankly, as you press it: I have not."

"I would like to ask, sir, if you have noticed that these crimes occur at regular intervals, and generally in the best parts of the city?"

"See here, young man, that very thought was in my mind when you entered this room."

"Then you have observed the fact, sir?"

"I have."

"This would indicate, would it not, sir, that the crimes were the work of a well-organized band?"

"That is my opinion."

"Such is the case, sir."

"See here, my young friend, what is your name?"

"Call me Dick Doom, sir."

"I can call you anything, but what is your real name?"

"I am to be known, sir, as Dick Doom."

"Then you are hiding under an alias?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why do you wish to hide your name?"

"Because I do not care to have it known, sir."

"The best of reasons; but pardon me if I ask if you are a fugitive from justice?"

"If I was I would not come here to the king of criminal-catchers."

"I am well answered."

"I will give you a better answer, to show my good faith, sir, and that is that I am homeless, friendless, and left my kindred because they were not congenial to me, and sought my ruin."

"I came to New Orleans to seek work in the Secret Service Corps, for I have certain work to do for myself, and can accomplish perhaps much for you in serving myself."

"Well, Mr. Dick Doom, I rather like your candor."

"May I ask how long you have been in New Orleans?"

"Not quite twenty-four hours, sir."

"And where from?"

"The North, sir."

"That is indefinite."

"It is as definite as I care to be, sir."

"And now to your business with me?"

"To capture the murderer of Mr. Soule Seldon, the robber of Mr. Swain, the man who robbed Mr. Deering, and those who are spreading counterfeit money in your city, is my business with you, sir," coolly responded Dick Doom to the New Orleans chief of police.

The chief pushed his chair back and gazed squarely into the face of his mysterious young visitor.

He was a reader of men in a remarkable degree, a man who had been a soldier, lawyer, judge, and chief of a detective agency, when called to the position he then held.

But before him was a mere youth, whom he could not look through as he did others.

"See here, Mr. Dick Doom: you have been twenty-four hours in the city, and yet know all about these deeds of crime lately enacted here?"

"Yes, sir; I read the papers, and I saw an editorial reflecting severely upon you and your force yesterday."

"Ah! you read the papers, do you?"

"Yes, sir; and I came to say that I thought it was in my power to compel that very paper to

compliment you in a few days, upon having caught the criminals."

"You know something about these criminals?"

"I do, sir; but I do not wish to be known in the matter."

"Ah! a case of State's evidence, eh?"

"There you wrong me, sir."

"Ah! what then?"

"Simply that I do not intend to be known to any one other than yourself, chief, for I am going to be a detective," was Dick Doom's calm response.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DICK DOOM'S DISCOVERY.

"GOING to be a detective?" echoed the chief. "Yes, sir, that is my aim."

"And why?"

"Well, sir, I believe I am so destined, while I have certain Secret Service work to accomplish for myself, as I told you."

"It is a hard life."

"I do not mind hardships, sir."

"And a dangerous life too."

"I shirk no danger, sir, that crosses my path."

"Well said; but now to the matter before us."

"You say that not one of your men have brought you a report that gives a clew to the men you seek?"

"Not one, I am sorry to say, and I am surprised greatly, for I have some splendid ferrets on the force."

"I do not wonder at their lack of success, sir, for the knowledge I have I gained by accident."

"And you have knowledge of those crimes?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will tell me what you know?"

"I am here, sir, to tell you that I know four of the five men you want."

"Good! and how did you find them out?"

"That, sir, is my secret, and I must have your pledge that my name is not to be used in this matter, that I will not be seen or known, for I do not intend to spoil my future usefulness by being recognized as Dick Doom the Detective."

"To you, sir, I will make a clean breast of it, come to you with all information I get, but outside not one must know me."

"Do you agree to my terms?"

"Something impels me to say yes."

"Then, chief, I wish to say to you that there is a band of cut throats and robbers in your city known as the L. L. of the G. G."

"The L. L. of the G. G."

"Yes, sir."

"Which means—"

"The Loyal Legion of the Golden Gallows."

"The Devil!"

"That is the name of this band, sir."

"How many does it number?"

"I can vouch, sir, but for five, but I believe there are more."

"Their leader I do not believe is known to his own men, for he goes masked, and has complete control."

"The men of the band are his slaves, and he rules them with an iron hand."

"You do not know this man?"

"I know his face, sir, for I saw it, but that is all."

"And would recognize it again?"

"Anywhere, sir."

"Look at those faces on the wall and see if it is there."

A quick glance the youth took at the faces of noted criminals and said:

"He is not of that stripe."

"Did you hear his name?"

"One of the men called him Verdi."

"Verdi—Verdi; I know of no such person."

"Describe him, please."

"Tall, well-formed, with a dark, handsome face, and exceedingly well-dressed."

"He also spoke with an accent, and wore only a mustache."

"I cannot place him; but to his men."

"One is a Spaniard by the name of Carlos, another a Frenchman who was called Honore, and there are two Italians, Napoli and Mazzini."

The chief wrote the names and nationalities down as the youth told them.

"You know that these men belong to this band of the L. L. of the G. G.?"

"I do, sir."

"And can place the four?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are they?"

"When I heard them speak of a rendezvous"



where they received their orders from their captain I went there and took lodgings."

"You are a bold fellow, Dick Doom."

"There was little risk, sir; but I got my room where I felt it would be safest, and with no doors communicating, while I could hear all who passed up and down the halls."

"The place is a *cafe*, a bar and restaurant combined, and it is not in a very decent part of the city, but I concluded I could stand it, and playing the country greenhorn was taken in."

"Beware that you are not taken out feet foremost."

"I am on the watch, sir; but I got my supper late last night, and I saw come into the crowded saloon all four of the men I have named."

"What proof have you got that they are the criminals I seek to capture?"

"See here, sir," and Dick Doom, as he had called himself, laid upon the table a slip of paper, and exclaimed:

"Carlos, here, robbed a vacant house on St. Charles avenue of two watches, two chains, three hundred dollars in gold, and four diamond rings."

"Just what was reported to me as missing."

"True, sir, but they did not report who did it."

"That is so."

"Mazzini circulated two thousand dollars in counterfeit money among the merchants."

"Ah!"

"Napoli picked the pocket of an old gentleman, a banker, and got one thousand in money, bonds, checks, notes and other important papers."

"Yes, these all agree with my reports."

"And last, Honore entered the residence of Mr. Seldon, was surprised by him, killed him, and robbed the house of a velvet box of jewelry, a bag of gold and some paper money."

"Correct you are; but how can we prove this?"

"If you will allow me to appear in disguise, sir, I will swear that I know that these men committed these crimes, and I will force from them an admission of their guilt."

"But to capture them."

"Are you adverse to disguising yourself, sir?"

"Oh, no."

"Then we will capture those men this night," was the confident response of the young detective.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PLOT.

THE chief had become intensely interested in his visitor, and said:

"See here, my young friend: there are ten thousand dollars awaiting the one who gives information for the capture of those men, and you will get it."

"Well, sir, if I do, my desire is to leave one thousand in your hands for the aid of the needy on the police force, as much more for detectives who are sick and in want, and a thousand more to be divided among the four men whom I shall ask you to take with you."

"You are a generous fellow, indeed, Dick Doom."

"I wish to be just, sir; but to my plot."

"Yes?"

"The saloon I speak of is the Santa Cruz Cafe."

"Good! I have wanted to get a pull on that place for some time."

"Don't pull the place, sir; leave it for seed."

"How do you mean?"

"Don't interfere with Landlord Tomasini, or let him think you suspect him, for he will still harbor criminals and you can harvest them when the time comes."

"Excellent advice; but that is where you are?"

"Yes, sir; and where I expect to remain for some time."

"You will be killed."

"Oh, no, sir; they won't harm a greenhorn like me."

"You're a dandy, Dick Doom."

"Thanks, sir, if it's a compliment; but I happen to know that there is a Spanish ship expected into port, for I heard talk of it last night."

"Well?"

"Do you speak Spanish, sir?"

"I do."

"Have you four men on your force who do?"

"A dozen."

"Can they disguise themselves well?"

"Perfectly."

"Then the plan will be for you and four men to come to the Santa Cruz Cafe about twelve tonight as Spanish sailors from the brig Madrid, and I will be there eating supper, having come in late from the theater."

"I will have spotted my men, and if all four of them do not come in, it will be well to put off the arrest until they do."

"You come over to me, and I'll find a way to mark those men for you; for, as I said, two are Italians, one is French, the other Spanish, and here is a written description of each, dress and all, which will be something of a guide for you," and he laid a paper upon the table.

"A very good guide, my friend; but I'll manage to get near you to hear anything more you have to say."

"All right, sir."

After some further conversation, the youth left the chief, who at once called a detective, and said:

"Follow that young man and see where he puts up."

The youth had not gone a square before he said to himself:

"I wonder if the chief will have me shadowed?"

"He should do so, for he does not know me."

"I'll find out, for if he does, then Landlord Tomasini might also, if he held any suspicion about me."

So Dick Doom began to loiter by the way, and to gaze into the windows of the shops with the air of a curious countryman.

He had not gone very far before he discovered a man doing just the same thing that he was.

He did not appear to notice him, turned into a side street, and looked at some pictures in the window.

The man did the same.

Then he went to the Santa Cruz Cafe, listening by the way, however, walked up to his room, returned in a few minutes and found his shadower talking to the barmaid.

Seating himself at a table, he ordered his dinner, and the shadower went out.

"Yes, the chief had me shadowed."

"I must look out, for I have much to learn."

Soon after, Tomasini came in and spoke pleasantly to the boy, who was emboldened to say:

"Juanita says she is going to get married, sir, and leave her place."

"Yes, and I am sorry, for she is a good girl, and I cannot easily replace her."

"I was going to ask, sir, for the place for my sister."

"Where is she?"

"Up the country."

"Is she good-looking?"

"She is said to be, sir."

"A pretty figure?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And has pleasant ways?"

"Yes, sir, she is as bright as sunshine."

"What pay does she want?"

"I don't know, sir, but she'll come for small pay to get to the city."

"But does she speak French?"

"Yes, sir, and Spanish a little."

"All right, send for her; but what will you do?"

"I've got a berth, sir."

"Where?"

"As cabin-boy on a ship trading in South America."

"I could give you something here, if you were discreet and attended to your own business."

"I do, sir, but I prefer to go to sea for awhile, and when I come back will come here of course, as my sister is here."

"All right, my lad, write to have your sister come and take Juanita's place."

"What is her name?"

"We call her Dot, though her name is Dorothy."

"A good name, Dot," and Signor Tomasini walked away, while Dick Doom having finished his dinner, wrote a letter, addressed it to "Miss Dot Gray, Aberdeen, Mississippi," and left it in the box to be mailed.

He had hardly gone out of the door before Juanita picked it up and called to the Signor Tomasini from an inner room.

"The young fellow wrote this, sir."

The signor was skilled in opening an envelope it could be seen, for he did it with no trace of its having been handled.

What he read was as follows:

"MY DEAR SISTER DOT:—

"I have found a most delightful boarding place, and the landlord is most kind to me."

"He has a barmaid who is named Juanita, and she is a pretty girl, and good to me; but she is going

to get married, and I asked for her place for you, and Signor Tomasini told me to write to you to come at once."

"I am going on a ship to South America, but I hope you will arrive before I leave."

"If not, go at once to the Santa Cruz Cafe and tell Signor Tomasini who you are, and I'll come there on my return and find you."

"Don't fail, for I would not wish to disappoint the kind signor."

"I will leave a letter there for you, if I leave before you come."

"With love,

"Your brother,

"DIXIE."

And all the time that the Signor was reading this letter Dick Doom was gazing at him from an alcove near the door, which he had dodged into instead of going out.

"Just as I thought," muttered Dick.

"He's all right, Juanita, see there, so you were wrong," said the Signor Tomasini.

"Yes, signor, I was wrong; but I did suspect that he was a spy on you," was the answer of the barmaid.

The landlord resealed the letter, and put it in the box just as the mail-collector came in and got the letters.

Then while the landlord and Juanita had their backs turned, Dick Doom slipped out and went down toward the river for a stroll along the levee.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE CAPTURE.

THE Santa Cruz Cafe was in full blast, as it always was toward midnight, and a couple of hours after.

The patrons of the place were dropping in from their various places of amusement, the gambling and drinking was in full blast, and an Italian band of two violins, a flute and harp was discussing the music of Italy, Spain and France, and avoiding American airs with studied persistence, as is usual with foreigners who seek a haven in this country.

Dick Doom walked in after the theater hour, and went to his corner for his supper.

The half-dozen barmaids who held forth at night were busy carrying wine and food, but Juanita was not among them, as she came on duty in the morning and served during the day, being bookkeeper and attendant both, for there was very little business except at night in the Santa Cruz Cafe.

Dick Doom ordered a particularly large supper, something that could not be very readily served, and would take some time to eat.

He was looking over the saloon like one who held simply an interest in seeing such a gathering.

The place was well crowded, and at last Dick Doom saw one of his men.

"Italian Mazzini with red cap at table under first lamp."

And he wrote this down.

Soon after he wrote:

"Napoli, Italian, seated next seat to door on left."

A more thorough search caused him to write:

"Spaniard Carlos, eating supper at third table from the side door left—has Turkish fez on."

For some time Dick Doom failed to spot his fourth man.

Then he spied him not far from where he sat. He had a bottle of red wine before him, and was at the table alone.

As he looked Dick Doom saw a man enter and pass first by Mazzini, then Napoli, next the Spaniard Carlos and end by coming up to the table and halting where Honore sat.

The keen eye of the young detective had seen a significant look pass between the new-comer and each of the four shadowed men.

He ordered a bottle of wine placed at the table where Honore sat and then stepped up to the bar and dropped in a red box what appeared to be a number of letters.

Returning after he did so to the table he sat down and took up his glass and bottle.

Just then there came into the saloon a group of Spanish sailors, and they appeared to be a little the worse for liquor.

Four of them halted at the bar while one said in Spanish:

"Come, senorita, we are from the Spanish brig Madrid, and can pay for what we get—here's a table—come, sonny, get up for your betters," and the man tumbled up against the young detective and very nearly fell to the floor.

The youth arose in seeming alarm, and retreated to the rear door, going up-stairs.

The sailors took his table with a yell of



laughter at his flight and the girls brought them wine.

"Say, Antonio, what was the name of the place they gave us—let me see—here it is," and the sailor who had come in contact with Dick Doom looked over a paper he held in his hand in a drunken kind of way.

Then they drank their wine, talked in a low tone and called out to Tomasini who just then came in:

"Senor, your place is no good.

"We are on shore for a good time, and we'll have it."

Tomasini urged the one who seemed to be the leader to take lodgings with him, telling him that the captain of the Madrid was his friend and always sent his crew to him.

While they were talking the other four sailors had separated, and had halted to await their leader.

Suddenly that leader drew off a wig and false beard, threw open his coat, and revealing the badge of the chief of police, cried in a voice that rung through the *cafe*:

"Men, bag your game.

"In the name of the law I command it!"

Each sailor at this threw open his jacket, revealing his badge of office, and as he did so dropped one hand heavily upon the shoulder of a man near him, while he covered him with a revolver.

"Not a mistake," muttered Dick Doom from his place of retreat in the stair-hall.

The crowd in the *cafe* arose in an ugly mood, to rescue the prisoners, but a shrill call from the chief caused a dozen men to appear in the door, armed with clubs and revolvers.

"Come! sit down and do not interfere here, for I know what I am about.

"The man who resists my authority I shall kill, so beware," said the chief.

Then to his men he said:

"Iron those four men and bring them along."

The clicking of the irons was heard, while one man called out:

"Why do you arrest these men?"

"That is none of your business."

"I'll make it my business. Come, men—"

But the chief was at his side with a spring like a panther, and a revolver was jammed hard against his head, while the stern command came:

"Hands up!"

The man obeyed sullenly.

"Officer Leach, put the irons on this man, too."

It was done, and the chief marched out with his prisoners, while in terror every man in the *cafe* hastily slipped away. Landlord Tomasini having gone some time before, with rare discretion upon his part.

"Every man who ran away to-night is a criminal," was Dick Doom's philosophical remark to himself, as he gazed upon the deserted saloon.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON A FRESH SCENT.

"CAN I have my supper now?"

"Say, young fellow you is always hungry," was the angry retort of the bar-girl whom Dick Doom had addressed.

"I was born that way," was the innocent reply.

"Well, I'll give you your feed; but there hain't none of us feels like eating after the row here to-night.

"Just look at this place!

"Not a living man in it and it just twelve o'clock, so we miss our tips this blessed night."

"They were as scared as I was, when that big fellow grabbed me and took my table."

"Yes, you turned pale."

"I felt pale; but I'm hungry."

"Well, there's your supper, and I hope it will make you sick."

"But it won't."

The girls now held a conference, while Dick Doom placidly ate his supper, and after awhile one went out of the *cafe*.

She came back soon and said:

"Orders to close up, so you can all go.

"I will stay up and let any lodger in, and fix up the cash and accounts."

The girls all left except the handsome Spanish girl who had spoken, and she locked the door, while Dick arose politely and said he would put out the lights and was anxious to help her.

"Are you good at figures?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then help me, for the signor says that your sister is coming to take Juanita's place."

"So she is."

"Well, she won't make the money we do at night, but the signor pays extra for the books being kept."

"Now you count the tickets and I'll run over the cash."

Dick Doom did so, and then having put them in bundles, according to amounts, said:

"I make ninety-six dollars in tickets."

"And the cash comes to but ninety-five."

"I have not paid for my supper yet."

"Well, you are an honest fellow, so I won't count that against you."

"Oh, yes, I wouldn't accept it for the world."

Dick handed over his dollar and the girl said:

"Now you wait here until I go and give the money to the signor."

"Is he sick?" innocently asked the youth.

"No, he's scared."

"I'd rather be sick."

The girl laughed and said:

"If any one knocks, ask for the word."

"If he says *Garibaldi*, let him in."

"If he does not say it?"

"Let him stay out."

"All right; will you be gone long?"

"About ten minutes."

The girl disappeared, and Dick Doom listened to her retreating footsteps.

Then he leaped over the bar, took a key hidden behind the red box, into which he had seen a man drop some letters early in the evening, and took out what were there.

There were ten in long, narrow envelopes, and they had the addresses upon them, four of which were the names of the four criminals arrested half an hour before.

The envelopes were sealed with black wax, and upon the seal were the letters:

"L. L. G. G."

These ten letters the young detective thrust into his pocket, returned the others to the box, and, locking it, was whistling "*Viva Garibaldi*" when the girl, Clarita, returned.

"The signor is scared," she said.

"You saw him?"

"Oh, yes."

"What is he scared about?"

"He was afraid he was going to be pulled in too."

"Why, he hasn't done anything."

"No, but they might think so, those law-hounds."

"Who were those men they took away?"

"Poor fellows that have done nothing, I am sure, for they have been coming here for a long time; but somebody has snapped a charge upon them, and they were arrested."

"I thought there was going to be a grand row."

"It did look like it; but that chief is a bad man to rouse, and he would have shown no mercy if he had been attacked."

"Somebody will knife him yet."

"What for?"

"He is too fly, too bad a foe against crooks, never giving them a chance."

"I suppose he'd arrest me, if he knew I had that."

"What is that?"

"A twenty-dollar bill, and I've got more of them, and know where I can lay hands on plenty."

"How rich you are."

"Yes, I've got enough of the queer; but I've got to get the real for it before I make my commission."

"I shoved twenty dollars to-night, and that means twenty per cent for me, see?"

"I don't understand just how you mean."

"Well, you've no need to."

"But take this out and get it changed for me."

She handed over a twenty-dollar bill, and taking it Dick Doom left the *cafe*, the girl locking the door after him.

He walked rapidly to the nearest cab stand, sprang in and said:

"To the Police Headquarters, quick!"

Five minutes after he met the chief as he was starting home, and the latter quickly turned back with him to his private office.

"Do you know a good engraver chief?" asked Dick Doom quickly.

"Yes, one of my detectives was a first-class engraver, and he keeps his tools here at headquarters."

"Then see this seal and set him at work at once to engrave a die like it, sir, for I must have it within the shortest time possible."

"Ah! it has L. L. G. G. on it."

"Yes, sir, and those four envelopes are addressed to your four prisoners, so tear the seal

off and give it to your engraver, but keep the letters.

"I will call to-morrow at ten."

"Well, you get your reward, my boy."

"Thank you, sir! but now I have no time to talk for I am on a fresh scent."

"At ten to-morrow," and Dick Doom hurried out, sprung into his cab and was driven back to the stand where he had gotten the coachman.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE TEN LETTERS.

"I TELL you I had a hard time getting that bill changed, for one or two said it was bad," and Dick Doom, having entered the *cafe*, after giving the password, placed the change upon the table before the girl.

"Said it was bad, did they?"

"Yes."

"What did you say?"

"I said a lady gave it to me, and of course it was good."

"Well, I am much obliged for the charge."

"Do you think you could get several more changed for me to-morrow, and give me the money to-morrow night?"

"I could try, you know."

Clarita took a roll of bills from her bosom and handed five of them to Dick Doom.

"I can trust you?"

"Do you think I would steal?"

"Oh, no, I'll trust you, for you are honest, or you would never have told me you had not paid for your supper to-night."

"Here is the money," and the five twenty-dollar counterfeit bills were given to the youth.

After some further conversation with the girl, he took his little lamp and went up to his room.

Throwing himself upon his bed, he was soon fast asleep.

When he came down in the morning, Juanita was on duty, and she begged him to tell her all about the row of the night before.

"You see I was too scared to know much about it, but I never saw men slip out of a place as that crowd did."

"You'd have thought they were all scamps."

"And the thought would not be far wrong."

muttered Juanita, as she ordered the youth's breakfast through the little window opening into the kitchen.

Dick Doom ate his breakfast with considerable relish, read the morning papers, and merely saw a short notice of the affair of the night before.

It was as follows:

"The chief of police and four of his men went to the Santa Cruz Cafe at midnight last night, and arrested four men who were under suspicion of some kind, but for what crime, our reporter was unable to ascertain."

"There is nothing in that to hurt me in my work," said the youth.

Soon after he left the *cafe*, made a circuit of several streets, and when sure that he was not shadowed, went into the Police Headquarters.

He was at once admitted to see the chief, and the latter said:

"Doom, I am going to give you this badge, and if you will show it when you seek me, it will admit you at once, at any hour; and, moreover, it will cause any officer of the force to obey your orders."

He pinned on the vest of Dick Doom a small gold badge in the shape of a shield, and upon which was engraved:

"RESPECT THE SHIELD."

"I thank you, sir, for I consider this an honor."

"Don't mention it, after what you did last night."

"You got them splendidly, sir, and made no mistake."

"Oh, no! not under your instructions could I; but I feared trouble at one time."

"So did I, sir; but is the engraver at work on that die?"

"Yes, and will have it for you by six o'clock to-night."

"That will do, sir, for I can then return the letters to the box with fresh seals on them."

"You have the four I gave you?"

"Yes, but would not look at them until you came."

"Now we will go at them; but you are sure those are the four men you shadowed?"

"There is no doubt of it, sir."

"I don't just see how we are going to get the proof against them."

"I will get it for you, sir, if you will allow me to do it in my own way."



"You certainly shall have your own way about it, Dick Doom."

"Thank you, sir, but you must not be in the secret, as I fear it might bring criticism upon you."

"This badge will help me out. Only give me an order to be allowed to see the prisoners."

"Here is another badge to wear with the other."

"It, with the the shield, will admit you anywhere."

"Now the names of two good men to call upon, for I will need them, sir?"

The chief gave the names of two detectives, and then Dick Doom said:

"Last night I saw a man come into the *cafe* and roam about as though looking for some one in the crowd."

"I was sure that I saw glances pass between the four men you arrested and this one, and there were doubtless others, though I did not know them so am not sure."

"He then came over to the bar and dropped these ten letters into a box, the key of which hangs near, but out of sight."

"Last night the crowd ran off after your raid, and as there was no business, all but one girl went home."

"She, like the one who holds the place by day, is in league with Tomasini I am sure."

"I helped her with her tickets, accounts and cash, and remained in the *cafe* while she went to pay the landlord who went into hiding at sight of you."

"Then it was I got these letters from the box, sir."

"You did well."

"There were more there, but these were alike and have the seal with the L. L. G. G. on it, so I took them."

"The girl, Clarita, I discovered was a shover of counterfeit money, on which she gets twenty percent."

"She gave me a bill to change, and I took her good money of my own, but kept her counterfeit and five other bills she asked me to get rid of for her."

"This is a valuable discovery, Dick Doom; but now to these letters."

"Open one."

This was done, and the chief said quickly:

"There is a band of cut-throats as you said, and these are orders from their chief to do certain deeds."

"Dick Doom, you were destined to be a detective."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### FATAL EVIDENCE.

THE first of the ten letters which the chief opened was addressed to Honore.

It was written in French, upon a folded card bearing the letters L. L. G. G.

The hand was disguised, and it read:

"Sunday night, Number 258 — street, party will pay to owner large sum of money."

"Be in house, and rob, kill if necessary."

"CAPTAIN."

The next letter was addressed to Carlos, in Spanish, and sent him upon a mission of crime.

The third and fourth were to the Italians Napoli and Mazzini, were written in Italian, and ordered them also upon a criminal expedition.

"Chief?"

"Yes, Dick Doom."

"These had better be copied, so that I may return them to the box, for if the captain heard of the arrest of these men, he would more than likely go to see if they got their letters."

"That is a wise head you have, Doom, on very young shoulders."

"Thank you, sir; but now as you have those four fellows safe, the other letters will be the ones to guard against, for wherever those men are sent, will be the place to lay a trap for them, and have a couple of officers on hand."

"Right you are, Doom; so now to the letters."

The seals were carefully broken, and the chief and Dick Doom read the orders given them with the greatest of interest.

All were orders to seek certain houses, or places for robbery, save one.

That one was addressed to an Italian named Loretto, and read:

"The present chief of police is in our way."

"He is a very dangerous man against us."

"If his life is taken, another in his place will not dare push us."

"He goes home about midnight, the foliage in his front walk arches and there is the place for you, with an Italian blade."

"Take any night after Sunday."

The chief held forth his hand to the young detective, and said with feeling:

"Dick Doom, I owe you my life."

"Upon the streets I am ever on the watch for a foe; but the moment I have entered my own little gate I dismiss all dread."

"And there is where the assassin is to lurk, is it?"

"Well, I'll prepare for that fellow and capture him myself."

"Better have help near, sir."

"No, I'll catch that fellow myself."

The different orders of the captain of the L. L. G. G. were written down, time and places being particularly specified, and the letters were all put back in the envelopes, ready to be sealed when the die was ready.

"Now, Dick Doom, what about that woman?"

"Clarita?"

"Yes, the girl at the *cafe*."

"What about her, sir?"

"She must be captured."

"Yes, sir; but give me a chance to catch her."

"How can you?"

"Well, you see, I have accepted a berth on a vessel going to South America."

"You have?"

"So I told the landlord."

"Ah, yes."

"And my sister is going to take the place of Juanita, the girl who is on by day, and who is to be married."

"Your sister?"

"Yes, sir, and you'll find her a very clever detective too; but I'll tell you more when she arrives."

"That is a fearful place to take your sister, Doom."

"She will not mind it, sir, any more than I do, and when you see her, you'll understand how much service she can render by being there."

"I do not doubt that; but what will you do?"

"I'll be on hand when needed chief?"

"Only let my sister know that you wish to see me and I'll come."

"I don't half-like your dropping out of my sight, for I had begun to lean upon you very heavily, Dick."

"All right, sir, keep it up, for, as I said, I'll be near when wanted."

With this the chief had to be satisfied, and then it was agreed that upon the following night Dick Doom would come to the jail to see the four prisoners.

"They demand to know for what reason they were arrested, talk about the wicked laws of America and their own grand native lands, but all the same if they went back there they would be guillotined, garroted or hanged for crimes they were guilty of before leaving, doubtless."

"I only wish the laws of our land would force an emigrant to show a certificate of good character and that he had some means of support, for as it is, we are getting many of the worst of the European rabble, the chaff where we get very little good wheat," and the chief spoke with considerable warmth.

Dick Doom said nothing, but it was very evident that he was thinking deeply.

After some further conversation the youth went out for a stroll.

He put in an appearance at dinner-time, but Juanita said the signor had not yet shown up, in fact he was gone out of town.

She gave the youth a good dinner and honored him by eating hers at the same time with him at the table.

She had rather taken a fancy to this green country boy, who at last said:

"I wish you'd change me a twenty-dollar bill, Juanita."

"All right, Dixie."

He took out the roll of counterfeit money and handed her a bill.

"No, you don't shove the queer on me," she said, angrily.

"The queer?"

"Yes; that money."

"Why, Clarita gave it to me last night to get changed for her."

"Clarita did?"

"Yes."

"Well, get it changed away from here, and I'll give you more of it to shove too, if you'll take it."

"Oh, yes, I'll do it," and Juanita handed him over, from a roll she possessed, a couple of hundred dollars.

Soon after the young detective left the *cafe*, walked about the city for a couple of hours, to get thoroughly acquainted with it, and then went to keep his appointment with the chief.

#### CHAPTER XV.

##### THE RED BOX.

THE chief saw Dick Doom enter without being announced.

"I tried the shield, sir," explained Dick.

"That was right."

"Well, what have you discovered now?"

"That the other girl, Juanita, is also a dis-poser of counterfeit money."

"Ah!"

"I tried to get her to change a twenty for me, and she got mad soon as she saw it; but I played innocent, told her Clarita gave it to me, and so she handed me two hundred to get rid of for her."

"Well, one of these girls will squeal, Dick."

"Squeal, sir?"

"Yes, that is tell all about it when we get her within stone walls, and I believe we'll find the press and tools right in old Tomasini's house."

"He is so frightened he has not shown up yet, sir, and Juanita told me he had left town on business."

"I do not believe it."

"I know it is not so, sir, for some letters came that she took up to ask him about, I feel sure; but the die is ready?"

"Here it is, and this wax just matches that which was on the envelopes."

"It is well done, sir, so we will seal them up."

This was done, and then Dick Doom went away with his letters.

He knew that he would have to be very cunning in getting them back in the box, without Juanita seeing him, so he hit upon a plan to get her out of the way.

When she had gone to see the signor, as he had told the chief, she had asked him to take charge of the *cafe* for her.

When he went in now it was just getting dark, and so he said:

"Juanita, I saw some cops sneaking about outside, and you better let the signor know, if he has come home yet."

The girl turned pale, and said quickly:

"I will, Dixie, and you are a good boy. Just stay in the *cafe* until I come back."

"With pleasure," assented Dick Doom.

She did not guess how much real pleasure it gave him to obey her bidding.

The key was quickly seized and the red box opened. There the letters still were which he had seen, and a couple more, but none in an envelope bearing the black seal of the L. L. G. G.

He quickly deposited the letters he had brought with him, locked the box and turned just as a man entered the *cafe*.

"Where is Juanita?" he asked.

"She will be back in a minute."

"I wish to see if there is any mail for me, so will open the box."

"See here! Juanita left me in charge, so you must wait until she comes back."

"I'll do no such thing."

"Out of the way, boy."

But, Dick Doom did not move.

"I say get out of my way."

"I will not."

"Then I'll put you out of the way."

He sprung toward Dick Doom as he spoke, and was met by a blow from the young detective that laid him flat upon his back.

He uttered a savage oath in Spanish and rising drew a long-bladed knife and rushed upon the boy.

But, with the quickness of a cat the youth leaped to one side, wheeled and dealt him a blow that again sent him upon the sanded floor.

He fell heavily, snapping the blade of his knife short off as he did so.

"See here, Red Rafael, what does this mean?" and Juanita sprung between the Spaniard and Dick.

"He would not wait until you came, and wanted to rob that little red box, and I wouldn't let him," said Dick Doom coolly.

"You should have waited for me, Red Rafael, when you saw a stranger here."

"He struck me, and *caramba*, I'll have his life some day."

"Some night you mean, but not if I see you first—keep back, Reddy, for I am not such a fool as I look."

Juanita laughed and said:

"Don't be a fool, Red Rafael, for he is a friend of the signor and thought he was doing right, as he was, for you know you wouldn't wish your letters open to any stranger who might come in."

"All right, I am sorry."

"Forgive me, little senor."



"Don't mention it," said Dick Doom, and he turned on his heel, while Juanita said:

"I'll give you the letters, Red Rafael."

She took the key, opened the red box and ran over the letters.

"None for you, Red Rafael."

"Let me see."

He took the letters, looked over them and said:

"Here is one for me."

"Oh, yes, I forgot that you had two names, Red Rafael."

And in a mirror Dick Doom saw that the letter the man took was one of those of fatal evidence, one with the black seal bearing the letters L. L. G. G.

Soon after Clarita came on duty, and following her the other girls dropped in one by one and put on their aprons and caps as waitresses, a change that added much to their personal appearance.

Then a man dropped in, and another, and they did so with the air of men who were reconnoitering their way.

By nine o'clock a dozen men were present, and of that number Dick Doom, who had his seat near the bar, saw two of the men draw out the black-sealed envelopes.

He marked them well, as he had Red Rafael, who sat not far away eating his supper.

Dick smiled as he saw that one of Red Rafael's eyes was already growing black around it, while one cheek was swelling to double its natural size.

Clarita had asked him to remain and help them, and he gladly did so, keeping tickets and orders.

Later in the evening a man came in and went to the red box.

It was the one who had put the letters in the night before.

"I know that form, though his face is disguised."

"It is the captain I saw at the cabin, and I want him," said Dick Doom in a determined way.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### RECOGNIZED.

WATCHING the man closely, Dick Doom saw that his beard and wig were false.

Nearly the whole of his face was concealed, for he wore a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes.

His clothes, too, were of rough material, but the young detective felt sure that he was the captain of the L. L. G. G.

He took the key of the red box, opened it, glanced over the letters and took out four of them.

They were the envelopes with the black seal.

"He has heard of the arrest of his men, and came to see if they had gotten their letters."

"I was lucky to return those four also."

"Now to shadow him."

But before Dick Doom could make any arrangement for leaving, the man wheeled and left the cafe.

It was fully a couple of minutes before the youth got a chance to slip into the stair hall, as though going to his room, and then out of the side door.

When he gained the street he saw, a block away, a man mount a horse and dash away in a gallop.

A man had held the horse, so he hastened to speak to him.

"I say, friend, was that a doctor rode off just now, for I am looking for one?"

"Don't know, but he may be."

"He asked me to hold his horse, and he put a dollar in my hand first, so I guess he's a doctor, for they gets rich quick, charging folks big money for guessing what's the matter with 'em, and not guessing right one time in twenty."

Convinced that the man was not an ally of the mysterious captain, Dick Doom turned back to the Santa Cruz Cafe.

To his delight he discovered that he had not been suspected of going other than to his room, and he settled himself again to work, anxious to learn all he could of the running of the cafe, the goings on there, and to familiarize himself with the faces of the people who frequented the place.

The cafe was not crowded as was its wont, for the scare of the night before had had its effect.

The crowd was watchful and nervous, and there appeared to be a hush resting upon all.

The girls went about filling orders in a more quiet way, and Dick Doom saw that the effect of the arrest and visit of the chief and his men had had a very wholesome effect.

Some two hours earlier than usual the crowd began to depart, and the girls went home, all except Clarita, who was on duty.

She got Dick Doom to help her with the accounts, and said:

"It was dull to-night, Dixie."

"Yes, they had not gotten over their scare," was the answer.

Soon after, Dick Doom retired to his room.

He had learned that in going to see the landlord, where he was in hiding, Juanita went by his room.

He was anxious to find out just where Tomasi hid, and said to himself:

"It will not be long before I do."

He slept soundly, had his breakfast, and then talked to Juanita for some time, after which he said he would go down and see the captain of the vessel he was to sail on, for he would soon be leaving.

He went down to the river, hired a boatman to row him across to Algiers, then got one there to bring him back to another part of the city, when he felt confident that he had thrown every one off his track, if he had been shadowed, and he was not going to be caught, if suspected.

Going up to the Police Headquarters, he dropped in upon the chief, who greeted him warmly.

"Well, Dick, what news?"

"They had a big scare on at the cafe last night, sir."

"Indeed?"

"It was the reaction of the night before, for there was only half the crowd, they were as quiet as though at church, and they broke up early."

"Well, they'll be going again in full blast soon; but how about these letters?"

"I saw the captain, sir."

"Ah!"

"He came in disguise, but I recognized his form, and he went to the box and looked over the letters."

"He took some out, and they were those addressed to Carlos, Honore, Mazzini and Napoli."

"Then he has heard of their arrest, and you were wise in taking them back."

"Yes, sir."

"Did you shadow him?"

"Clarita had me helping her in the office, so I could not get away as quickly as I wished, and only had time to see him mount a horse, a man was holding for him, and ride away at a gallop."

"Of course, that threw you off?"

"Yes, sir, but I went back to the cafe and when Clarita went off to see the landlord, leaving me in charge, I looked in the red box and found that all of the L. L. G. G. letters had been taken, though the captain only took four."

"That means that the other members of the band have received their orders."

"Yes, sir."

"And will act to-morrow night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I have my men picked out to thwart them, except when I am to be the victim of one of the fellows, and I will look after him myself."

"A stiletto in an Italian's hand is a dangerous weapon, sir."

"Yes, and so is a bowie, or a revolver in an American's hand, though, of course, we are not versed as are the Italians in stabbing in the back."

"I had a little fracas with one of them last night, a Spaniard they call Red Rafael, though he got an L. L. G. G. letter under another name."

"I had to knock him down twice, and he promised to knife me for it some day."

"And he will keep his promise," said the chief, impressively.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONFESSION.

THE same evening just as it began to grow dark, Dick Doom set out upon what was the venture of his life.

He was perfectly cool about it, and had made up his mind to act, as he had told the chief, without his knowledge, that he might not implicate him in the affair.

He made his way to the office of a costumer's and it was an hour before he left the place.

Then he went to the prison and asked to see two men whose names he gave.

Soon after there appeared at the iron gate of the inner prison a priest and two attendants.

"I would see the four men who have been lately incarcerated here, my son."

"Their names are Mazzini, Napoli, Honore and Carlos," he said.

"You have the authority, father?" was the answer in an inquiring way.

In response the priest held forth his hand and showed something to the keeper, who at once admitted him along with his two companions, who were known to him.

The first visit was to the cell of Carlos, the Spaniard.

The keeper unlocked the iron-grated door, the two attendants in felt slippers remained without, their presence not being suspected and the priest was admitted.

The key turned in the lock and the steps of the keeper died away.

"Well, my son, you have gotten yourself into trouble," said the priest, drawing the man toward the door.

"Yes, father."

"Of what are you accused?"

"I know not, father, for I have heard no charge made against me."

"What sin have you committed of late?"

"Ah, father, I have been most sinful."

"Shall I tell you of what you are accused?"

"Yes, father?"

"You entered a house on St. Charles street, while the owner was absent, and robbed it."

"Yes, father."

"That is true?"

"It is, father."

"Where was the house and what date was the robbery?"

The man answered.

"I am glad that it is no worse for you, and I advise you to make a full confession and throw yourself upon the mercy of the court."

"I will, father."

"A notary public will visit you to-morrow for your confession."

"I will confess only my own act, father; not a word to criminate others, for I dare not."

"Your own sin you are alone responsible for," and the priest gave a signal for the keeper to come.

The cells of Mazzini, Napoli and Honore were next visited, with about the same result, the Frenchman boldly admitting his murder of Mr. Seldon, but stating that he acted in self-defense, when attacked by that gentleman.

Thus the rounds were made, and the two attendants without had taken down all that had been said.

The next morning a notary visited the jail, and the four confessions of guilt were taken down.

Upon that same day the papers opened severely upon the chief of police, for his want of energy and ability in tracking down the criminals that were infesting the city.

As he finished reading the papers Dick Doom walked in and tossed some papers upon his table.

"Why, these are the sworn confessions of those four scamps I have in jail, Dick."

"Yes, sir, I visited them last night, in the disguise of a priest, and urged their making a clean breast of it this morning, before a notary."

"For fear they might not do so I had with me the two men you suggested, who remained outside, and took down all that was said."

"And you impersonated a priest?" seriously said the chief.

"I did not say that I was one, only wore the garb, and gave them good advice."

"They followed it, and the notary has their confessions."

"You have seen the papers?"

"Yes, sir, I read them at the cafe this morning."

"Well, they are rather severe?"

"Yes, sir; but wait until to-morrow morning, when you can come out with the information that you have the four men in jail, their confessions of their guilt, and the men who go to-night to carry out their orders."

"Then it will be your time to hit back."

"Dick?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will give you the authority to raise a Secret Service force, and you shall be chief of it."

"Thank you, sir, I will act alone, for I can do better work, and there is much I wish to do," was the answer.

"Well, nothing must be known of our having these fellows in prison until we capture their comrades to-night."

"Oh, no, sir, for that would spoil our game."

After some further conversation Dick Doom returned to the cafe and told Juanita that he had to leave that evening, for his vessel was about to sail.

He expressed regret that he had been unable to get rid of the counterfeit money she and



Clarita had given him to get changed, and told her he supposed his sister would arrive the following morning.

He packed up his traps, squared up his dues and just at nightfall bade the girls good-by, the landlord not yet appearing.

He made his way to the river, called a boatman and was rowed out upon the river toward half a dozen vessels lying at anchor in mid-stream.

Half an hour after the boatman returned alone.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE ASSASSIN.

THE chief of police had a pretty little home on the outskirts of the city.

It was a cozy, ideal home, a comfortable cottage, standing in the center of a square, an acre in size.

The front yard was a perfect flower garden, with an overarching hedge leading from the gate to the door steps, a distance of a hundred feet, and walks diverging from it here and there upon either side.

There were *gloria mundi* trees, magnolia and several live-oaks, which served to give a dense shade, which at night made the front yard at black as a tomb.

A single light glimmered in one of the windows of the cottage, a beacon to guide the late-coming chief home.

All was as silent there as the grave, the river running not far away, and the distant rumble from the town coming faintly to the ears.

The air was heavy with the perfume of flowers, and now and then from some leafy covert a mocking bird would break the stillness by a few notes of melody.

Suddenly a form appeared in the distance.

He seemed to be skulking along like one who would not be seen, as a man might who was bent upon mischief.

He reached the gate of the chief's home, entered and disappeared in the gloom of the hedged walk.

No door opened to show that he was admitted, and all remained silent as before, only the mocking bird had ceased its singing as though frightened.

Thus one, two hours went by, and then over the levee came two forms.

They had just left a boat on the river.

They came on with stealthy tread, reached the chief's gateway and entered it.

They too disappeared in the gloom of the arched foliage and all remained silent as before.

Another hour passed. Midnight had come and gone.

A distant church spire started in its sleep, as it were, and tolled forth the hour of one.

Then a quick firm tread was heard upon the board walk which stood in place of a pavement in that part of the town.

The step grew nearer and nearer, until a form appeared in view.

It was the tall form of the chief.

He reached the gate, hesitated an instant and glanced out over the river.

Then he entered and closed the gate after him, seeming to have some trouble with the latch.

Another moment, and out of the darkness sprung two forms, one with upraised arm and descending knife.

The knife struck with a ringing sound and was shivered to atoms, while the chief clutched his assailant by the throat with iron grip.

But suddenly there flashed upon the struggling men a dazzling light, and it came from back in the shadow of the arched hedge.

It revealed a second assassin leveling a revolver at the chief.

But ere he could obtain aim, a sharp report rung out from behind that dazzling light, and the intended assassin dropped dead, a bullet in his brain.

Then the chief hurled his first assailant to the ground and clasped the manacles upon him in a second of time.

"Ho, there, who is that?" he called out, just as his front door was thrown open and a light streamed out, illuminating the arched way its full length.

And in the doorway stood a handsome woman with white face and revolver in hand.

"All right, Rose, I am not hurt, though I have one dead and one live assassin here," called out the chief.

Then, having secured his prisoner, he turned to search for the one who had come to his aid so opportunely.

But the rescuer had disappeared.

"This is remarkable.

"I cannot account for it," muttered the chief.

Then he told his wife that he would leave the dead assassin in an out-house, and return to his quarters with his prisoner, as he had only returned home to give the intended murderer a chance to kill him, never suspecting that there would be two of them.

"And who was it that came to your rescue?" she asked.

"I have not the slightest idea."

"How strange."

"Yes, it is a mystery to me, I assure you."

"I will send the van up for the dead man," and with this the chief went off with his half-dazed prisoner, for he had been stunned by a severe blow in the face and choked almost into insensibility.

After a walk of some distance the prisoner said:

"I was a fool."

"Certainly."

"Two of us were not enough to master you."

"Think so?"

"Yes, for you had on a steel shirt."

"Oh, yes."

"It shivered my knife."

"I knew it would."

"But my friend would have killed you had you not been too quick and shot him first, when the door opened and gave you a chance to see."

"Ah, that was it, was it?"

"You know."

"Yes, I know and I don't know."

"If that is your idea of it, it goes; but I did hold a different opinion, though never mind now."

"I suppose you will hang me?"

"I am afraid I cannot do so, as you failed in your design to kill me; but I think you will have a long rest."

"Come, here is a car, and if I mistake not, when we arrive at the prison you will have no lack of company," and the chief, who was now manacled to his prisoner, got upon a car going down into the city.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### TURNING THE TABLES.

WHEN the chief arrived at the prison with the assassin, he found quite a flurry of excitement there.

He saw half a dozen of the men whom he had sent off on the different missions to checkmate the plans of the Loyal League of the Golden Gallows, and they reported that they had without a failure captured their men.

In one instance a midnight marauder had shown such a desperate resistance, wounding a detective, that he had been shot, but his dead body had been brought in by the two men who had been sent there to thwart him.

"Here is another prisoner."

"Put him in the murderers' row of cells, and send the van up to my house after the dead body of this man's comrade," said the chief.

The men looked at each other and smiled.

It had evidently been a night of triumph for the police force, from the chief down to the jailer.

Then a note was handed to the chief, and he opened and read it, while he asked:

"Who brought this?"

"Don't know, sir, but some one passed along in the dark, tossed it in and said it was for you, and was important."

What the note contained was as follows:

"No one except yourself, for the prisoner was hardly conscious, knows that you did not shoot the other assassin."

"So let it be believed, for I must not be known in the affair."

"Will see you to-morrow afternoon at four."

"The papers will have different stories to tell now."

"D. D."

"Well!" and the chief gave a low whistle.

"Now, I never thought of that boy, but had it in my mind that one of my men had secretly gone there to aid me."

"That was a quick and dead shot he made, throwing the bull's-eye ray upon him for an instant to catch aim, and then getting away as silently as a shadow."

"He is a remarkable fellow, that Dick Doom, and as great a mystery to me as death."

"Well, he has rendered me invaluable service, and now puts the seal upon me of silence."

"By silence I get all the credit of his acts, and yet he has sworn me to secrecy."

"Some day I hope it will be better: but the boy is evidently upon a trail which he can only carry out to his satisfaction by keeping perfectly quiet and unknown."

"Now to send reports to the papers."

After finding that not one of his plans had miscarried, and knowing the anxiety his wife

must feel regarding him, the chief set out for home.

The next morning the papers came with articles fully vindicating the actions of the chief.

One specimen of head-lines was:

"MORE THAN VINDICATED!"

"SILENT YET ACTIVE!"

"Half a Score of Criminals Captured!"

Another paper headed its articles with:

"CLEVEREST DETECTIVE WORK ON RECORD!"

"MURDERERS AND ROBBERS UNEARTHED!"

"A Wholesale Capture of Crooks!"

The chief smiled grimly as he read these articles, the *amende honorable* being made to him in every instance for the aspersions cast upon him.

One of the papers tersely told the affair as follows:

"When the chief of police made the raid upon the Santa Cruz Cafe some nights since he bagged four men who he was sure were implicated in the robberies lately occurring in town and the murder of Mr. Seldon."

"How he got his information is not for us to say, but he said nothing regarding his prisoners, and laid in wait to capture the balance of what he knows is a well organized band of cut-throats."

"Securing information in the mysterious manner of Secret Service men, he managed to have picked men at every place where these human hyenas were to strike their blows."

"In one case the officers after both being wounded by the desperate criminal were forced to kill him."

"The others were brought in alive."

"The chief himself was to be the victim of assassination, but forewarned was forearmed."

"He put on a shirt of steel web, went home, received the blow of one assassin, whose knife was shivered, and captured him while the other was killed."

"Result: two dead criminals, one murderer and seven robbers in custody."

"The murderer and three of the others have confessed their guilt."

"Full particulars will be given to-morrow."

"All praise to our gallant chief, to whom we humbly bend and offer apology."

"N. B. Newspaper men do not know *everything*, vast as their knowledge is."

## CHAPTER XX.

### "DOT."

THE town was alive with excitement after the papers came out informing the citizens of the occurrences of the night.

Juanita was so impressed, when she came on duty at the Santa Cruz Cafe, at what Clarita had told her, that she sat down and at once began to peruse the papers.

She was very certain that Landlord Tomasini would not show up, for the worthy was in his retreat frightened half out of his wits.

By the arrest of ten of his patrons, and liberal ones too, or rather of eight and death of two, it came so close to him that he was all but wild with dread.

Clarita had bought all of the papers and had taken them up to him to read.

Juanita was devouring her paper and neglecting her coffee, when to her surprise she saw a woman's form in the doorway.

A carriage had rolled up to the door of the cafe, and deposited a passenger and her trunk.

The new arrival entered with some hesitation, while the hackman gave her trunk a whirl into the saloon, received his fare and was off.

Juanita was anxious to read the paper, but was curious to know about the stranger.

Excepting the wife of the landlord, who seldom appeared in front of the establishment, and the girls who waited upon the customers, no woman ever visited the Santa Cruz.

The stranger came forward somewhat timidly, and Juanita just took in her dress.

She was attired in a stylish suit of gray cloth, that fitted her form to perfection.

Upon her head was a turban that was very jaunty, a wealth of golden curls fell about her neck, and her eyes were jet black, large and expressive, while her teeth were even and as white as milk.

She had a wrap across her arm, a duster, and carried in her hand an umbrella and small sachel.

Upon her trunk, which was a little worn was the name:

"MISS GRAY—Miss."

Juanita had a glance at the end of the trunk



and interpreted its lettering to read that it was the property of Miss Dot Gray of Mississippi.

"This is the Santa Cruz Cafe, I believe?" said Miss Gray, of Mississippi, in a low sweet voice, and with a smile that would have won a case before a jury.

"It is, senorita."

"I came here for two purposes, one expecting to find my brother, the other to secure a situation he had obtained for me here."

"You are the sister of Dixie Gray?"

"Yes, I am Dot Gray."

"Well, your brother sailed last night for South America."

"You arrived too late to see him."

The hand went up with dainty kerchief in it, and Dot Gray wiped her weeping eyes.

"Gone to South America, and I did not see him."

"Ah, don't mind that, for men leave here every day for all parts of the world, but they get back again, and your brother expected to return within three months."

"I am glad of that; but I cannot blame him, for I suppose his duty called him to obey."

"That was just it."

"He's a fine fellow too, for he lodged and fed here while in town."

"A good boy with no bad habits."

"I am glad to hear that."

"And you expect to remain?"

"Oh, yes, that is what I came for."

"The place does not scare you off then?"

"Oh, no, for beggars must not be choosers."

"Ever been in the city before?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, this is not the St. Charles Hotel, as you may know, and at night it is rather tough here; but your duties will be what mine have been, to come here at eight o'clock in the morning, and remain until the same hour at night."

"There is little doing by day, so you have to keep the signor's books, cash and all that."

"Can I see the signor?"

"I will tell him you are here," was the evasive answer.

"Are you going to leave?"

"Yes, I am to get married next week, and was only waiting your coming to give up my place."

"I'll stay to-day and show you what you have to do."

"Going to be married?" said Dot Gray with a delighted smile at the successful catch the girl had made.

"Yes, I am going to marry an engraver."

"Oh, how nice."

"You will stay here I suppose?"

"I should like to."

"Can you keep your mouth shut?"

"How do you mean?"

"Can you keep a secret?"

"Oh, yes."

"If not, you need not expect to stay here, for the signor does not want a blab."

"I work for the interest of my employer, knowing nothing else."

"Then you'll do."

"Just wait here."

Juanita disappeared and in a short while returned.

"The signor is away, but his wife says I am to show you your work, and tell you just what your duties are."

"I'll call the man to carry your trunk up."

In answer to the call a villainous-faced son of sunny Italy appeared, looking as though he had been called in to cut a throat, for he was all smiles.

When told that he only had a trunk to carry up-stairs, Antoni looked offended.

But he shouldered the trunk, and Dot Gray soon found herself in a very pleasant room, the very one in fact which Dick Doom had occupied.

After making her toilet she went down and reported to Juanita for duty.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A FAIR VISITOR.

In the afternoon, having very quickly gotten an insight into her duties, Dot said she would like to go shopping for an hour.

Juanita was unhappy that she could not accompany her, for she was a woman, and hence devoted to shopping.

She asked Dot to at least remember her by taking a look at the latest thing in bridal veils.

Dot dressed herself in her best, and with a dotted veil, rather thick, half concealing her handsome face, she came down into the cafe, ready to go.

Juanita gazed at her with real envy, and ventured the remark:

"You'll take with the men, Dot; see if you don't."

Dot bowed her thanks and went out, having received directions of just how to reach Canal street.

She wandered about for awhile, then turned up at the headquarters of the chief of police.

"I wish to see the chief," she said, sweetly, to the officer on duty.

"He has an appointment, miss, at this hour, and does not wish to be disturbed."

Dot hesitated an instant, then raised the flap of her dress and revealed a gold shield, swung by a chain, to a key of the same metal.

"Pass in, miss," and the officer bowed.

The chief looked up with surprise, saw a very handsome girl, and, ever courteous, arose and asked:

"How can I serve you, miss?"

"I have a letter for you, sir."

The chief broke open the letter and read:

"DEAR SIR:—

"This will introduce to you my sister, Dot, who has come to New Orleans to take the position of day manager and clerk at the Santa Cruz Cafe."

"It will be her intention to get the girl, Clarita, changed to the day work, so that she may go on at night and be thus enabled to make certain discoveries useful to you."

"I have gone on the vessel, as I hinted I would, for a short while, but you will find Dot just as able to help you as I am, only she, like myself, must remain unknown."

"Please secure the rewards due me, dividing three thousand, as I suggested, and should my sister need any money kindly oblige her with what she may ask for."

"Let me say that you can trust her in all things, just as though she was Dick Doom instead of Dot."

"Yours to command."

"DICK DOOM."

The chief read the letter through and then warmly shook hands with the girl, while he said:

"Well, Miss Dot, I am very sorry to lose your brother for awhile, but glad to get your help."

"I suppose he has told you just what we wish to find out about the goings on at Santa Cruz Cafe."

"Yes, sir, he has left me written instructions which you can read if you wish."

The chief glanced over the paper handed to him and said:

"Yes, he has covered the entire field, and I can say no more than that old Tomasini is suspected of being in league with counterfeiters, who in fact have their retreat in his den, while the girls there get rid of much of the money, as do the patrons of the vile place."

"The den is a place where I would not have you go, and even now you can retract your intention, if you will, while I will see that you have a home with my wife until your brother's return."

"No, sir, thank you, I have, with my brother, a certain duty to perform, and nothing can swerve me from my purpose."

"I am not one to become contaminated by contact and you need have no fear of me."

"If there is counterfeiting and other crimes being committed in the Santa Cruz Cafe, I will unearth them, you may be sure."

"You are a very brave little woman, and when you can get away from your duties there I wish you to run out and visit my wife."

"It will give me pleasure to do so, sir."

"I have the highest regard for your brother I assure you, for he is as plucky as he is gifted."

"He is a detective by force of destiny, and I owe him my life, yes, and the splendid work that has been done of late here, and which I get the credit of."

"It is but just, sir, for my brother must remain unknown in this whole matter."

"And he certainly is, even to me, for I do not know even his name."

"Nor mine, other than Dot," she said with a smile.

"Not even your name, or where you are from."

"But you know where I am while in the city, and that will be all that is necessary."

"I can ask no more, Miss Dot; but I would like to know how you gained entrance here, against my orders to admit only your brother."

"With his badges, which he left with me."

"You appear fully competent to wear them, Miss Dot."

"Wait until I have proven myself competent to wear them, sir," said Dot, and she arose to go.

"Your brother says if you need any money I am to give it to you."

"Thank you, sir, I may have to call upon you."

And after receiving a few instructions from the chief Dot left the Headquarters and returned to the Santa Cruz Cafe.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE GIRL DETECTIVE.

JUANITA was so won over by the fair stranger, who had come to take her place, that she gave such a glowing account of her, the landlord felt that he would see her.

The fact was that Dot had brought to Juanita as a present a very pretty bridal veil, and that completely won the Spanish-American girl.

"Do you know," said Dot, "I think I would rather do the night work here, than the day."

"You have not seen what the night work is yet, Dot."

"Well, I would prefer it, and if the signor is willing to let me take the night work I'll be willing to keep the books as well."

"He'll do it, for Clarita does not like the work, and she is very bad at books and figures."

"Would you ask him for me, please?"

"Indeed I will, and between you and me he is not away but here now."

"The truth is, Dot, the men who were arrested the other night were his best patrons, and because they come here he was afraid he would be run in too."

"I see."

"So he went into hiding."

"But they might come and search the house for him."

"Let them, they cannot find him."

"Now I'll go and see if he will have a talk with you, so you can go on duty to-night, and Clarita can show you as I have done."

She disappeared, and, left in charge, Dot took the key of the red box and investigated the contents, and seemed to make herself perfectly at home.

"The signor will see you," said Juanita upon her return, and Dot was told to go up to her room.

The signor had ventured out of his hiding-place for a short while to see his new clerk.

"You are Dot?" he said politely, for there was a certain refined dignity about the girl which commanded respect.

"Yes, sir, I am Dot."

"Well, I was sorry to lose your brother, who could have made himself very useful to me and been well paid for it, too; but I am glad you have come."

"I will do my best, sir."

"I feel that you will, for you look like a girl who can keep a secret."

"Indeed I can, sir."

"And you would not betray your employer?"

"I would not willingly be guilty of a mean act, sir, toward any man I sought to serve honestly," was the reply.

"Well said."

"Now Juanita says you are willing to take the cafe at night?"

"Yes, sir, if you wish."

"It will impose double work on you, for you will have to keep my books and cash as well."

"I am not afraid of work, sir."

"Then you suit me exactly."

"Now, what pay do you want?"

"I brought money with me, sir, and will not need any for some time; but when you have seen just what I can do, you can pay what you think I am worth."

"Now I like you, Dot."

"Come and meet my wife."

He led the way along the corridor to the end; but he touched a certain spot in the paper on the wall, and what proved to be a partition turned on a center pivot, leaving a space on either side for them to pass through.

He showed her just how to close and open the partition, which appeared to be solid.

In the space they entered was a circular stairway which ascended a couple of stories; then they stepped upon a landing, while above them was a skylight.

Another touch upon a secret spring, and a partition turned as the other had done.

Then Dot found herself in another house, she was sure, one that ran across the rear of the large cafe.

There were four rooms, opening into each other, and they were handsomely furnished.

In an easy-chair sat a dark-faced Italian woman who greeted the girl with a look of suspicion, in spite of the explanation of her husband.

But Dot won her over by her pleasant manner, offered to help her in any work she had to do, and when she started back for the cafe the woman had thawed out and accompanied her as far as the second partition, showing her just how to reach their rooms and return.

Dot thanked her most kindly and went on her way to the cafe.

After a short talk with Juanita she asked:



"Is that a good physician whose sign I saw on the house in the rear of this one?"

"Oh, yes, its Doctor Negeli, and he is the signor's doctor, and prescribes for all of us."

"You are not sick, are you?"

"Oh, no, only I suffer sometimes and wanted to know."

"You can reach his office by the signor's rooms, you know, for the doctor has the lower part of the house."

"No, I didn't know that," and Dot looked very innocent.

Soon after Clarita came in and was introduced to the new clerk.

"You'll draw custom, I think," she said as she eyed Dot critically.

"I shall be glad if I can help the signor any," was the quiet reply.

"Juanita says you wish the night work?"

"Yes, if it is not depriving you of—"

"Not in the least, for I am only too happy to take the day."

"I have been expecting to be killed for some time, in the rows those heathen get into, and happy am I to have escaped."

"Will you shove the queer also?"

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, not initiated yet, I see; but you will be soon."

"Well, I'll show you to-night what a Purgatory the Santa Cruz Cafe can be," and Clarita laughed with bitter pleasure in anticipation of the surprise she would give Dot.

#### CHAPTER XXIII. THE TRAP SET.

THE chief was pleased, some two weeks after Dot Gray's visit to him, to see her again enter his office.

He arose politely and leading her to a seat said cautiously:

"I feared, Miss Dot, that you had forgotten me."

"Oh, no, sir."

"You seemed so happy in your new quarters that I began to think you liked the life you led there."

"Ah, I saw you there, sir, yet dared not show that I knew you."

"Saw me there?"

"Yes, sir."

"When, pray?"

"Three nights after my work began, when you came in as an old peddler, selling knives and other things, and again when you appeared as a priest."

"What, you penetrated both of my disguises, one just after you went there and the other two nights ago?" and the chief seemed amazed.

"Oh, yes, sir."

"I surely did not believe any one would know me, for I passed muster before my detectives."

"I recognized you by that very peculiar ring you wear, sir, a gold rattlesnake, with rattles of pearls, and one emerald, one ruby eye."

"By Jupiter! I forgot to remove my ring."

"That is why I knew you, sir, for I observed the ring when I visited you before, and when I bought that handsome stiletto from you, as a peddler, I saw it on your finger."

"Again when you came in as a priest I saw it on your finger as you wrote the address of a man and told me if he visited the *cafe* to tell him to come and see Father Salome."

"Well, you have as keen eyes as your brother has."

"Thank you, sir! but I have some news for you."

"I do not doubt it."

"To-morrow night I wish the aid of forty officers."

"Whew!"

"I can deliver into your hands the engraver of the counterfeit plates, with press, plates and considerable money, the landlord of the Santa Cruz as the aider and abettor, one of your detectives, whom you have long believed to be dead, who is a prisoner there, and Juanita and Clarita, two of the principals for getting rid of the money, as I am supposed to be, also half a dozen culprits."

The chief whistled again, but said quickly:

"Pardon me, Miss Dot, but you must come of a detective family, for you have accomplished in your way as much as your brother did in his."

"You will need all the men I named, sir, for there are three doors to the *cafe* that are to be guarded, and the front and rear of Doctor Negeli's house also."

"What has he to do with it?"

"You will find by reading this paper, sir, for it gives full instructions."

"But let me tell you that I must be arrested also."

"You?"

"Oh, yes."

"But why?"

"I am in league with those people, and must be arrested with them, for it will never do for me to be suspected as a traitor."

"That is true."

"I must be held, and one of your officers must go to my room, get my trunk, which I will have all ready, and take it, with me to a cab."

"When the officer gets me away from the *cafe*, he is to leave me, and report to you that I have escaped."

"I understand."

"And will you let one of your detectives be the driver of the cab?"

"Certainly."

"And may he drive me to your house?"

"By all means."

"You see I must not be known in this matter, sir."

"I understand that fully, Miss Dot."

"When you arrive at your house I will explain all to you, sir, and you will have to concoct some story about my escape from the hack, though my trunk was left, and all that."

"I will be guided by you wholly, Miss Dot."

"But you will have the forty men?"

"I will."

"There must be no mistake, for that is an ugly crowd, rendered more so by your late captures from their midst."

"I do not doubt it, Miss Dot."

"It will take to guard the five doors, of the *cafe* and the doctor's house, three men each, and all of the balance to step into the saloon and awe the crowd there; in fact I wish that you would bring fifty men, for when you go to arrest Clarita and Juanita, who are both to be there, as the frequenters of the place are to present them with some token of regard, for I set that idea in motion, so as to get those two dangerous girls into custody when you did the men, I say when you arrest them, and me, then there is going to be a show of resistance, mark my words."

"Miss Dot, I shall bring with me two captains of police, four sergeants and sixty men, for there shall be no failure in that matter, I assure you."

"I know how hard you have worked on this, and that you have the magazine all ready to ignite."

"You have done a world of good, and no lack of energy on my part shall be the cause of its not being carried through completely."

"Of course I cannot march so large a body of men through the streets, but they shall be divided, wear civilians' clothes over their uniforms, and at a given time start for the Santa Cruz Cafe from six different points, and cut off all means of escape."

"What is the hour you set?"

"At midnight, sharp."

"Then count on us to be there, to arrest you and your confederates," said the chief, with a smile, and he escorted Dot to the door.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

##### THE TRAP SPRUNG.

It was a gala night at the Santa Cruz Cafe, for a hint of the new manager, Dot, had been taken by the patrons, to give to both Juanita and Clarita a gift of some kind, as an appreciation of their services.

Juanita had married a young engraver, and Clarita had an intention of doing likewise, having fallen in love with the engraver's assistant, as he had with her.

So the *cafe* was crowded in honor of the occasion, and Signor Tomasini, who had gotten over his scare when he saw that he was not hurt, was in his glory.

The receipts will count up heavy to-night in money, Dot; but don't forget to shove the queer, for you can get rid of several hundred," whispered Tomasini.

The girl gave him a sweet smile and bowed.

She was looking exceedingly well, being dressed in black, with a scarlet scarf about her waist and ribbons of the same hue.

She wore no ornaments of any kind, neither earrings, bracelets, pin or even a finger ring, but had a large scarlet rose pinned at her neck in place of a brooch.

One of the crowd made the presentation speeches, and Signor Tomasini sent the girls, who were also dressed out for the occasion, around with a bottle of wine for each table as his treat, a rare thing for the signor to do.

The engraver, Juanita's husband, was there, smiling and pleased.

He was ordinarily a sad-faced, long-haired man having more the appearance of a poet, or artist, than an engraver.

His assistant was also present, a red-faced young man with a very extensive amount of cheek in his expression.

There were three doors to the Santa Cruz Cafe!

One front of good size, a side door on the other street, and one in the rear of the office, which opened into an alley.

Without one word of warning these three doors were suddenly thrown open and in through each of them came a crowd.

The signor flattered himself that they were a party from the levee, and he was going to have more patronage.

But a loud shout of warning went up, as it was seen that fifteen policemen occupied each door.

The chief was there, and two captains, with sergeants and officers galore.

A wail and groans followed the shout of warning, and Signor Tomasini was making for the stairs when he ran against the muzzle of the chief's revolver.

"Halt! hands up all!"

"I want no trouble, and the man who resists dies!"

These were startling words, and the crowd, balked in an endeavor to escape settled back in their seats and tried to wear a "not guilty as accused" look.

"Signor Tomasini, in the name of the law I arrest you, Berkley Bond, engraver, Rylie Ritchie, engraver, Juanita Bond, Dot Gray, Clarita Castello, and Mrs. Tomasini."

"Captain Kennedy, look into the face of each man in that crowd and see if any more are wanted than those named."

"Captain Ogden, hold these prisoners while I make a search of these premises."

"Sergeant Graves, you and four men follow me."

The sergeant took a lamp and the chief went on a voyage of discovery.

He seemed to be rather well acquainted with the geography of the house, though now and then he halted and referred to a paper he held in his hand.

The cook and his assistant were also held by the officers, and then the chief ascended the stairs.

Another examination of the paper, and he turned a spring at the end of the corridor.

The partition turned on its pivot, and the chief ascended the circular stairs.

He was fumbling at the upper partition when it was opened and a voice said:

"Is that you, husband?"

"No, madam, I am not your husband, but the chief of police."

The woman fainted, and the chief, placing her in charge of two officers, passed on into the rooms.

In one was what appeared to be a boxed sewing-machine.

Instead it was a small printing press.

Then these were plates of steel, engravers' tools, and all the paraphernalia of counterfeiters.

"Now, down-stairs," said the chief, and with some difficulty he raised a trap-door that led down the stairs to the floor below, which was the second.

There he found Doctor Negeli.

But the doctor had simply taken a quick poison, and shut himself out from all tribulation.

In a rear room was our invalid, or one so considered.

"It is Detective Royal," cried the chief, and the poor fellow, kept in irons for months, was set free by his companions.

Having thus sprung the trap and caught his game, the chief left a captain and ten men in charge of the premises, and with his prisoners, seven in number, not to speak of half a dozen men picked out of the crowd as criminals, started in hacks for the prison.

One hack carried Dot, her trunk and an officer, but after going a short distance the latter alighted and said to the driver:

"Take her to the chief's house."

"I understand," was the answer, and the cab rolled away.

#### CHAPTER XXV. DICK AND DOT.

It was nearly two o'clock when the chief was able to get away from Headquarters, for he had to see to the safe-keeping of his prisoners, among whom were the three women, Mrs. Tomasini, Juanita and Clarita.

The girls who were waitresses in the *cafe* were not arrested, for Dot had stated that they were not guilty as were the others.



The women were put in separate cells, as were the men, Tomasini, the two engravers and Antoni, for the doctor had ended his career, as has been stated.

At last the chief took a hack and drove home. He dismissed the hack at the gate and his wife opened the door for him with a cheery greeting and congratulations upon his success.

"Your sister has arrived and told me all. It was a wonderfully clever capture," said the wife.

Then she ushered the chief into the pretty sitting-room where Dot sat looking as demure as possible.

"Miss Dot, I could almost kiss you for this night's work."

"It was splendid, and I owe it all to you, though I think it a shame that I have to gain favor which rightly belongs to you."

"I do not care, and you should not, sir, for it is just what I wish, to remain unknown."

"You surely are in this matter, as your brother was in his daring deeds before you."

"You let it be known that I escaped, I hope, sir?"

"Oh, yes; I stated that the officer reported leaving you for awhile, and, instigated by you, the hackman drove off without him, so rapidly that he could not be even followed."

"Then the counterfeiters do not suspect me as a traitress?"

"No, indeed!"

"That is just as I wish it for future use, should occasion rise, for I may wish to play girl again."

"Play what?"

"Play girl."

"I don't understand, Miss Dot."

Both the chief's wife and Dot laughed.

"I may wish to play Dot again."

"But you are Dot!"

"Oh, no!"

"What do you mean?"

"I am not my sister."

"Not your sister?" repeated the puzzled chief.

"No, I'm Dick Doom, not Dot, the girl detective," confessed the supposed girl.

The chief of police leaped to his feet, while his wife burst into a peal of laughter.

The chief strode up and down the little library of his cottage for full a minute, and then wheeling upon the supposed girl, said:

"Do you mean that you are Dick Doom?"

"I do, sir!"

"The boy detective?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have thus deceived me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And everybody else?"

"Fortunately, sir."

"I do not believe a word of it."

"Why not?"

"Why, you are a girl."

"Indeed I am Dick Doom, sir."

"Well, you make a very handsome girl."

"So I have been told, sir, by scores of men of late!"

"Why, look at that golden hair?"

"A wig, sir," and Dick removed his golden curls.

"Now I know you; but how did you do this?"

"I have played girl before, sir."

"I'd swear to that."

"It comes easy to me."

"So it seems; but why did you do it?"

"Well, sir, I knew that as a girl, a clerk in that place, I could make myself most useful to Signor Tomasini, and get at the secrets of the affair; so I got the place for my sister Dot."

"Have you a sister Dot?"

"No, sir."

"Well?"

"I did ingratiate myself there so as to learn all the ins and outs of the place, and then I began to set my trap, which you were to spring."

"But how did you get there?"

"You see I gave out that I was going on a voyage to South America; so I left the cafe, went to the levee at dark, got a boatman to row me out to some vessels lying at anchor in the stream, for fear I might be shadowed. But I did not go on board, but went over to Algiers, where I got another boatman to row me back to the city."

"I had already engaged a room of a quadroom, and sent there a second-hand trunk I had bought, and which I had my name put on, as though it had been done some time."

"I had also bought for myself a complete feminine outfit, packed it in the trunk, and ordered a hack to come for me the next morning."

"It did so, and I left the place in feminine garb, down to the station, got another hack there and drove to the Santa Cruz Cafe."

"That was my plan, sir, and when I came here to-night I told your good wife all, as I now tell you, and ask for pardon, for I thought it best that even you should not be in my secret."

"You are right, for I wouldn't have felt half the interest in you that I did, believing you to be a girl."

"But I congratulate you, Dot, I mean Dick, and I am sorry there is nothing new for you to do in the detective line, for you bagged half the criminals in town."

"I have not yet found the king crook of them all, the captain of the L. L. G. G." was the significant response of Dick Doom.

#### CHAPTER XXVI.

##### DICK DOOM'S THEORY.

WHEN Dick Doom appeared at breakfast the following morning he was dressed as his proper self.

He had made some changes however, a different suit of clothes, another style of hat and changed his appearance so as not to be recognized as the country boy seen around the Santa Cruz Cafe.

"I would never recognize you, Dick," said the chief, "as the youth who first came to me as a detective."

"You have a wonderful gift of changing your appearance even to your facial expression."

"Now you would readily pass for a dandy young planter, or sport."

"I'll drop in and see you during the day, sir, for I am anxious to start out on the track of this captain of the L. L. G. G."

"Take a few days' rest, and then start in."

"No, sir, he might slip through my fingers in that time."

"Although it is my business, I cannot see just how you are going to work to find him."

"I have not yet decided myself, sir."

"Have you any theory about him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you mind giving it to me?"

"Oh, no, sir, for I shall need your aid."

"Well, I pledge it now, Dick."

"I think I shall come to the city as an up-country sport."

"Eh?"

"Well, sir, as the son of a rich planter."

"I'll set a little money in circulation by high living, and will ask you to get me introduced into the best society."

"I can arrange it, Dick, but I don't see your game, and why you should spend your money, which, by the way is your own of course, and I'll pay to you to-day your rewards, which for this last brave deed will give you something over thirteen thousand dollars."

"Thank you, sir, I'll bank it and draw as I need it, for I am at the end of my rope now, financially, having gotten rid, in my wardrobe purchase and other things of the hundred dollars I borrowed from you."

"That goes to the detective expense account, Dick."

"Well, sir, I wish twenty-five dollars given to each officer and detective who was present at the capture of the Santa Cruz Cafe."

"You are over generous, Dick."

"No, sir, I only wish to be just."

"It shall be as you wish; but to this going into society?"

"Well, sir, you remember the man Honore called his captain by the name of Verdi, as I told you?"

"Yes."

"He was a man of striking presence."

"Well?"

"Refined, elegant and affected the accent in his speech."

"You do not think it was real?"

"I know that it was not."

"How so?"

"When he spoke aloud to himself, after his men had left, there was no accent."

"Ah!"

"Then, too, his saddle and bridle were those of a gentleman."

"Yes?"

"There was a letter upon the saddle-blanket which I remembered."

"Well?"

"It was D."

"Well?"

"He had small feet, his hands were shapely, and his kid gloves of the best."

"When he took them off to tie up his valuables he revealed a very peculiar ring, as well as I could see it, for it looked like eagle's claws clasp-ing a ruby."

"Yes, I see."

"Now I am sure that that man is in society."

"You are getting things down fine, Dick."

"His dress, appearance, manners, all indicated it, and I know that in society is the place to look for him."

"Dick, I begin to see through your theory."

"Yes, sir."

"It is the true one."

"You think so."

"Go on."

"Well, you remember the four first crimes?"

"Yes."

"They were committed in the fashionable part of the city."

"So they were."

"You recall the ten letters?"

"To the L. L. G. G., you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"They were all ordered to commit crimes in fashionable homes, or against some one in the higher walks of life."

"Very true."

"They showed a wonderful knowledge of such people's movements, and this could only be gained by intimate association with them."

"For instance, the robbing of a man going home from the Pickwick Club, the sending a robber to get Mrs. Doome's jewels, and to steal important papers in the possession of Lawyer Butler, which only an associate would know of."

"That is just it, sir."

"Go ahead, Dick."

"Well, chief, by going into fashionable life I can, through spending a little money, get invited all around."

"Wherever I go I will look out for a man whose name begins with D, and who wears a gold eagle's claw ring holding a ruby."

"Yes."

"I will keep an eye open for the man I saw in the cabin, when I beheld him meet the four cut-throats there, and who unmasked his face when they left."

"You would remember him?"

"I never forget a face, sir."

"Well, Dick, your theory is perfect, just right, and though we hate to lose you I suppose you must become a howling society swell right off."

"That is my present aim in life, sir," was the response, and the chief hastened away to his office.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

##### THE DETECTIVE'S RESOLVE.

THE young detective sat pondering for some time alone and in silence, after the departure of the chief from his home.

Then he got up and began to pace to and fro.

It was evident that he was musing deeply.

Suddenly he stopped short, his handsome, almost effeminately beautiful face lighted up with excitement, and he said in a determined way:

"I will do it!"

He paced to and fro again for awhile, and then mused aloud.

"Yes, I will do it."

"There is no need to ask the chief to get me introduced into society, for I can get there in really a better way."

"They stand at the head; there are none higher, or more respected, and when I seek them with money of my own, and a firm determination to take no aid of them, I know that they will feel that I come to them from the regard I feel for them."

"Yes, I will take a drive to-morrow up to The Ferns, and see those who were as dear to me as a sister and brother could be."

"Gordon Grayhurst, when I tell him I have a good motive, will aid me by taking me just where I will be apt to run across that man Verdi."

"I will go to-morrow, and something tells me I will not fail."

Soon after he bade the chief's wife farewell, said that he would be away for several days, perhaps, and with a small gripsack left the cottage.

He went at once down to the chief's headquarters, and with his badges on was at once admitted.

"Ho, Dick, glad to see you."

"Read the papers until I get through with some work that is pressing."

The chief threw the morning papers to him, and taking a chair Dick Doom read the account of the raid of the night before upon the Santa Cruz Cafe, with a great deal of interest.

One of the accounts was as follows:

#### COUNTERFEITERS CAPTURED!

"A HANDSOME REWARD FOR DETECTIVES."

"Our Chief of Police at Work."

"Last night, having through his detectives, set a



trap, the chief of police sprung it and bagged his game.

"He had reason to believe that the Santa Cruz Cafe was a nest of thieves, and so he put a bold man to work up the business.

The result was that last night, when they were having a good time at the Santa Cruz the chief of police, two captains, four sergeants and sixty officers made a swoop down upon the place.

"The forces were well placed, in different streets leading to the den, and at the hour of twelve sharp, started at a double-quick for the place.

"The entrances were guarded and the chief led his men into the crowded saloon.

"Tomasini, the landlord, sought to escape, but ran up against the muzzle of the chief's revolver, so changed his mind.

"An intention to resist was quelled with drawn revolvers ready for deadly work in the hands of the officers.

"Then began the search, and it was found that there were passage-ways in mock wall, secret stairs and all that, and a panel door leading into Doctor Negeli's house next door.

"The doctor finding discovery inevitable very wisely took his own life.

"But in his house were found the complete instruments of counterfeiters, with press, plates and all.

"The two engravers, their wives who were accomplices and shovers of the queer, Tomasini and his wife, Antoni his man of all work, were taken, the doctor escaping by suicide.

"Then among the crowd the detectives, who looked them carefully over, found a number of criminals who were wanted.

"It will be remembered that Detective Royal was supposed to be dead, having been foully dealt with; but instead he was found a prisoner in irons in Tomasini's house.

"He had gone there in the discharge of his duty, was suspected, led into a trap, and for months had been a prisoner there in the doctor's quarters.

"When they had their prisoners secure, the rest of the crowd were told to get out, which they did with an alacrity which showed a very great anxiety to go.

"There was one prisoner who managed to escape.

"This was a young girl known as Dot, and who was Tomasini's bookkeeper, clerk and cashier.

"She is said to be a very bright woman, though quite young and pretty, and she showed her cleverness by getting rid of the officer who had her in charge, taking her to prison.

"She pretended to have left her sachel, full of money, sent the officer after it, and he told the driver to watch her.

"What she gave the driver is the question, for he whipped up his horses and fairly flew away from the scene at a pace which proved that pursuit was useless.

"The number of the hack was not known, but it is to be hoped the driver will be found, that he may be punished, or that this woman may be captured, for it is said that she was one of the ringleaders in the counterfeiting crimes.

"We certainly congratulate the chief and his officers upon their splendid capture."

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

##### ANOTHER WILL.

"WELL, Dick, what do you think of that?" said the chief, finishing his work as Dick Doom laid the paper aside.

"It is a fair statement of facts, sir."

"It is rather severe on Miss Dot."

"She deserves it, sir, for being found in such bad company," was the laughing reply.

"Well, I have closed up the Santa Cruz and left an officer in charge, and that part of the town this morning has really a Sunday appearance."

"I don't wonder, sir."

"I will now see about getting you into society, Dick?"

"No, thank you, chief, I have another idea now."

"Out with it."

"I happen to know some people whom I will go to, and so can arrange it that way. I am ready to go now, for I brought my grip with me, so do not look for me for a couple of days."

"All right, Dick, I have every confidence in you."

"Now, sir, I wish to get some money?"

"My purse is yours, Dick, so help yourself, and I have just figured up, after taking out what you request, that I will have to bank in the name of Dick Doom, just thirteen thousand five hundred dollars."

"Thank you, sir. But I'd prefer to have " in the name of Dixie Gray?"

"All right."

"You see Dick Doom is my detective name, and Dixie Gray is to be my society cognomen, and as I wish to go it a little strong I wish to be able to draw as I am."

"You are right, so to Dixie Gray it goes, only it will not do for me to bank it for you."

"Why, sir?"

"It would create a suspicion among the bank people, as you wish to remain unknown."

"All right, sir."

"I will go to a lawyer friend of mine, Sargeant Butler, and ask him to bank for me it as a client of his."

"Thank you, sir."

"Now I will be off," and helping himself to several hundred dollars Dick Doom left the chief and made his way to a livery stable.

Here he hired a handsome pair of horses and buggy, threw his grip in and started for The Ferns.

He sent the animals along at a good pace, but slackened up as he came to the scene of his little camp years before, where he had gone to the rescue, with his dog, of Colonel Grayhurst and Marion.

There by the side of the road were the graves of the two highwaymen who had fallen that day, and Dick halted and gazed with interest upon the scene.

At last The Ferns came in sight, a negro boy opened the gate, and, as he halted before the piazza, he spied Gordon and his sister seated there.

They recognized him at a glance, as he did them, though the change in all had been great.

Such a welcome as he received made his heart glad.

What a long talk the three had together that night, and then Gordon told the story of a cloud that had fallen upon himself and his sister.

It was in effect that the executor, George Thurston, had managed to get the whole estate into his control, and the legacy, which the colonel had left him, instead of being, as they supposed, a few thousand dollars, was nearly half its value.

The lawyer also showed due bills of the colonel for large sums, and at last Gordon said:

"When we pay all to that man, Dixie, we are ruined."

"Don't pay it!"

"How can we help it?"

"I will tell you. In the first place that lawyer is not the executor."

"What?"

"He was, in the will he was acting upon, but your father had trouble with him."

"I recall that."

"They had a settlement, too, and then your father made another will."

"What?"

"He made another will."

"Where is it?"

"I'll get it for you, as I happen to know all about it, and he showed me a secret I believe he told no one else."

"Now, I happen to know all about this last will, for I heard it read, and it was drawn up all right, signed, sealed and witnessed by three persons."

"Who were they?"

"One was your overseer."

"He has full control now for Thurston."

"Another was an engineer who was repairing the sugar mill machinery at the time."

"And the third?"

"Was Captain Pratt of the Fashion, who dined here that day."

"Fortunately that engineer is now at the Claiborne plantation, and Captain Pratt will be down in his steamer to-morrow and make our landing."

"Now for the will," and going to one of the carved panels in the oak walls, Dixie opened it by touching a spring, and took therefrom a will, many other important papers and some money and valuables."

"Now send for the overseer, the engineer, and a good lawyer," said Dixie.

It was quickly done.

#### CHAPTER XXIX.

##### THWARTED.

THE overseer came into the library, and with the manner of one who owned the place.

"Your name is Jackson, I believe," said Dixie.

"It is, and who are you?"

"One who can send you to prison, so lower your tone and change your manner."

"In this room you witnessed the signing of Colonel Grayhurst's last will, and yet you went under the pay of Lawyer Thurston and allowed him to rob Gordon Grayhurst and his sister by springing upon the courts a will that was written years before."

"You know that Colonel Grayhurst held receipts for every dollar he once owed Thurston, and if you do not come out and tell the truth you shall go to prison— Hold! I am an officer of the law and here is my authority."

Dixie showed his badges and the overseer at once cried for mercy.

"Sit there and write your confession of what you know is the true statement about this will."

The man obeyed.

"Now, sir, for safe-keeping I will clasp these upon you," and taking a pair of thin steel manacles from his pocket he at once had the overseer at his mercy.

The engineer arrived later and frankly stated his case.

He did not know that any other will had been made use of.

Lawyer Sargeant Butler arrived late in the afternoon, went over the facts of the case, and that night Captain Pratt was met at the landing, taken from his boat and driven to The Ferns.

He, too, knew nothing of a change of wills, and gave the date when the last one was made, and which he witnessed.

Then Lawyer Thurston was sent for in haste, and arrived the next morning to breakfast.

When confronted by proofs and witnesses of his guilt he pleaded for mercy and surrendered every dollar of his ill-gotten gains, after which he hastily gave up all practice and decamped for Chili, glad to get out of the United States.

Words cannot portray the gratitude felt by both Gordon Grayhurst and Marion for their rescue from almost poverty, but they in vain urged Dixie Gray to accept the legacy of twenty thousand dollars left him by their father in his last will.

"You see I am well off," he said, "and really do not need money."

"But now, Gordon, I've got a favor to ask of you."

"Granted before asked, Dixie."

"For certain reasons, and I will tell you and Marion in confidence, because I wish to catch another scamp, I wish you to take me to the clubs, let me mingle a little in fashionable life in New Orleans, and visit just where I expect to run across a man I am on the track of."

"I'll do it with pleasure, Dixie, and if you will give me the name of the man, or describe him, I may be able to help you."

"I do not know his name, but think that it begins with D. I'll describe him, though, and a ring that he wears."

"I know your man, I am sure, Dixie, now that you speak of the ring."

"Who is he?"

"A rich man who came to the city some years ago, and is a favorite in society. Who he is no one knows, but every one likes him."

"Well, we'll take a look at him, and if he is my man invite him here, please."

"Oh! this man has been here often. He is rather sweet on Marion, young as she is, though she does not like him, I believe."

"Then she won't mind if I capture him here."

"No, indeed!"

"What is his name?"

"Dudley Dandridge."

"Ah! now I recall that the D I saw had a little D in the center. That is my man, Gordon."

#### CHAPTER XXX.

##### CONCLUSION.

DUDLEY DANDRIDGE was the man, for Dixie recognized him in the club at a glance.

He was invited up to The Ferns the next day, a special invitation which he could not refuse, and seemed anxious to accept.

He came, riding up on horseback, the very animal which he had ridden, saddle and all, to the lone cabin that day!

He was introduced to Dixie, who at once said: "Signor Verdi, Captain of the Loyal League of the Golden Gallows, you are my prisoner!"

A cry broke from the man's lips; he reeled as though about to fall, and turned deadly pale as he dropped into a chair.

Before he knew it he was in irons, and a revolver was leveled at his head.

"Now, Mr. Dandridge, alias Captain Verdi, we will start for the city, arriving there after dark. I have an excellent team, and you will ride with me, ironed hands and feet."

Gordon Grayhurst followed on the robber captain's horse, and that night the chief of police was struck dumb with amazement to see Dick Doom walk into his office with a man whom he knew as one of the pets of society!

"This is my man, chief," remarked the young detective, with a triumphant smile.

"Dick Doom, you are simply a wonder to me," averred the chief; and after searching the prisoner he had him led to a cell.

To dwell upon the sufferings of our fellow-beings who are unfortunate would be unkind, so I need only say that the criminals who fell under Dick Doom's Death Grip met full justice at the hands of the law, though no one ever knew that the one who had shadowed them to their doom was a Detective by Destiny.

THE END.



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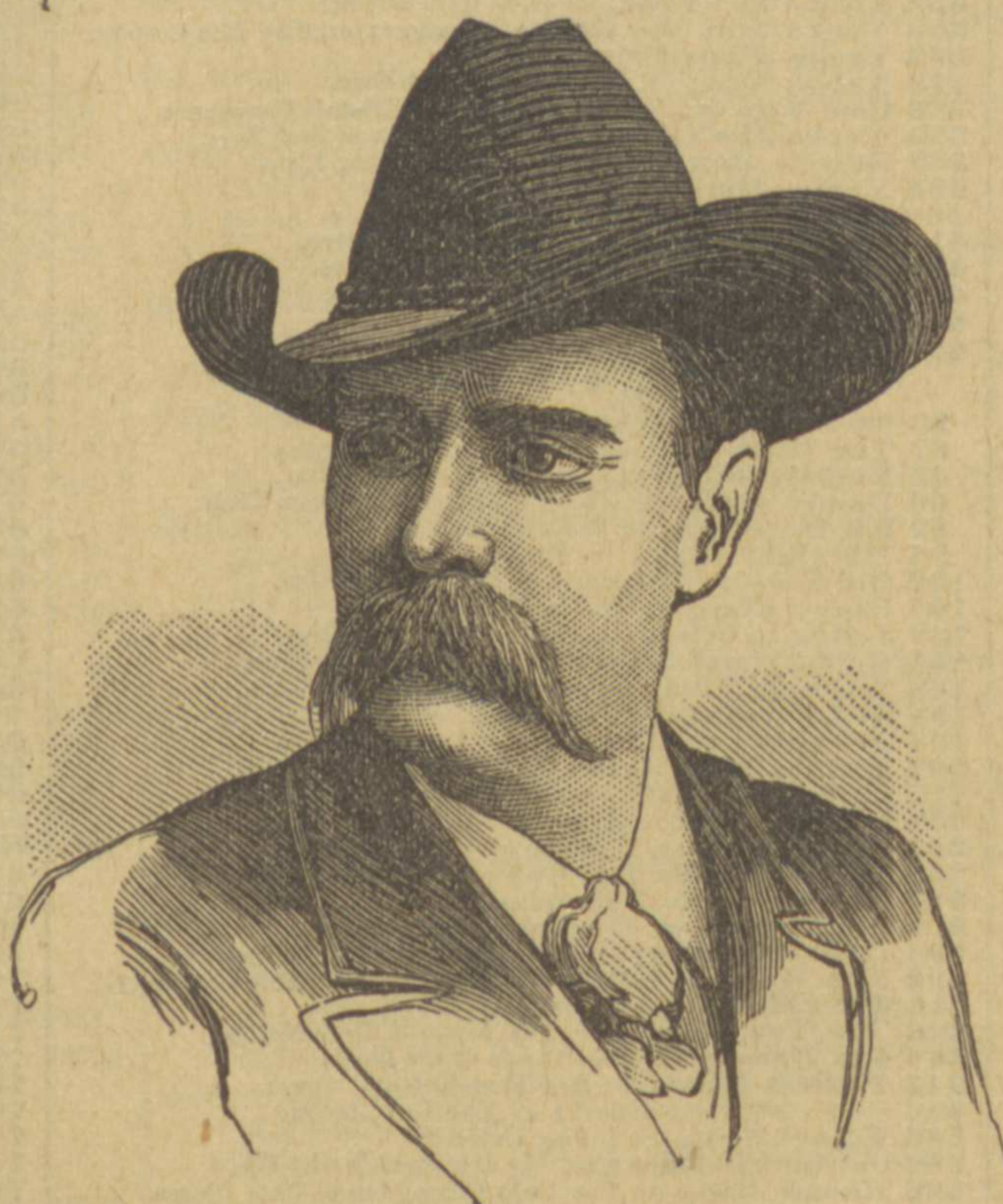
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